National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

NIETZSCHE'S OPPOSITION TO MORALITY

BY

FRANK CAMERON ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Edmonton, Alberta
1994

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-94849-3

Canada

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: Frank Cameron

TITLE OF THESIS: Nietzsche's Opposition to Morality

DEGREE: Master of Arts

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1994

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

1003 Jalna Boulevard
London, Ontario
N6E 2R2

DATE: August 1994

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Nietzsche's Opposition to Morality submitted by Frank Cameron in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Dr. Robert Burch

Dr. Margaret M. Van de Pitte

Dr. Leon Craig

Professor J. Cameron MacKenzie

August 25, 1994

For Ludwig

ABSTRACT:

In this thesis I examine Nietzsche's opposition to morality. I argue that Nietzsche's "campaign against morality" is an attempt to show that morality is based on error in the sense that it places the source of value in a transcendent "beyond". I discuss Nietzsche's view of the concept of morality and his theory of the origin of morality in order to develop an understanding of why Nietzsche claimed that the existence of moral judgments was dependent on the self-denying presumption to a transcendent ground. I argue that in Nietzsche's early works, he traced the origin of morality to the beginning of civilization and the erroneous beliefs of primitive human beings regarding the supernatural source of custom. In addition, I show that in Nietzsche's later writings he rejects his earlier theory of the origin of morality and offers a replacement theory contained in On the Genealogy of Morals. The interpretation defended here is that Nietzsche's account of the good/evil mode of valuation in the "slave revolt" against the noble mode of valuation constitutes his new theory of the origin of morality. However, since I also argue that the acceptance of the good/evil mode of valuation depends on error, I am able to account for the consistency in his early and later views on morality. In addition, I maintain that Nietzsche's conception of morality (i.e. a morality of altruism) remains constant throughout his writings, and that a major feature of his project involves a critique of the unegoistic instincts. As well, I discuss Nietzsche's positive views which are meant to counter the nihilism resulting from his repudiation of morality and metaphysics. I argue that Nietzsche presents the idea of the eternal recurrence as an existential imperative which, if taken up, allows the individual to overcome the threat of nihilism.

CONTENTS

Introduction: Nietzsche's Opposition to Morality	1
Chapter One: Nietzsche's Early Views On Morality	4
Chapter Two: Nietzsche's Later Views On Morality	21
Chapter Three: Nietzsche's Positive Views	38
Nietzsche's Immoralism or Amoralism?	50
Endnotes:	53
Texts and Translations:	55
Bibliography:	56

INTRODUCTION:

Nietzsche's philosophical autobiography Ecce Homo (1908) includes the author's reflections on his published works. Regarding Daybreak, Nietzsche's fifth major publication,[1] written in 1881, he writes: "With this book my campaign against morality begins" (EH,III,D,1). However, Nietzsche's new preface for The Birth of Tragedy (1872), entitled "Attempt at a Self-Criticism", added in 1886, insinuated that this *first* work marked the beginning of his campaign: "It was *against* morality that my instinct turned with this questionable book (BT,SC,5). Similarly, Human, All-Too-Human (1878), which directly preceded Daybreak (1881), contains a clear expression of Nietzsche's "campaigning" spirit. In fact, in the preface to his major work on morals On the Genealogy of Morals (1887), Nietzsche admits taking up the same ideas as in Human, All-Too-Human. As well, his "campaign against morality" receives much attention in his subsequent works.

The aim of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive examination of Nietzsche's opposition to morality, one that encompasses his early and later views on morality. The interpretation defended here is that Nietzsche's critique of morality features two major components:

1) the "deconstruction of morality" (the "campaign against morality"). And,
2) his positive views.

The "deconstruction" of morality involves Nietzsche's attempt to scrutinize that which has hitherto been placed under the banner of "morality". He employs a genealogical method of inquiry to determine how moral views have become prevalent and predominant. I argue that Nietzsche's "campaign" is an effort to support his view that morality is based on error in the sense that it places the source of value in some transcendent "beyond".

I examine Nietzsche's early critique of morality, and offer an account of his theory of the origin of judgments of moral worth. I claim that Nietzsche traced the existence of moral judgments and actions to the beginning of civilization and the erroneous beliefs of primitive humans regarding the supernatural source of custom (mores). The beliefs regarding traditional valuations that impel individuals to their moral actions are based on error in the sense that they are beliefs in "imaginary causalities" (eg. the belief that mishaps are the result of gods who are angered by the violation of a custom). In addition, I will show that the claim that human beings are motivated by false beliefs to make moral judgments, and then act in accordance with these judgments also applies to Nietzsche's conception of the current morality (a morality of altruism). Specifically, I argue that the morality of altruism has replaced the authority of tradition as the source of morality with the authority of conscience (or, for the religious, the authority of god), and requires a belief in imaginary causalities.

In Nietzsche's later writings, I claim that a major development takes place in his thought. The interpretation defended here is that Nietzsche now regards the morality of

mores as a pre-moral phenomenon, so that custom is no longer regarded as the origin of morality. I argue that Nietzsche offers a new theory of the origin of morality, contained in On the Genealogy of Morals to replace the inadequate theory of Daybreak. I maintain that Nietzsche's account of the good/evil mode of valuation in the "slave revolt" against the noble mode of valuation constitutes his later theory of the origin of the moral valuation of persons. However, since I also claim that Nietzsche holds that false beliefs are responsible for the acceptance of the good/evil mode of valuation, I am able to account for his own view that his later works continue to support the view of Daybreak that the existence of moral judgments is to be explained in terms of erroneous beliefs. In addition, I will show that throughout Nietzsche's writings his conception of morality remains constant, morality is identified as altruism (selflessness), and that an important aspect of his project is to reveal the "great danger" behind the unegoistic instincts.

Nietzsche's repudiation of morality and metaphysics meant that life was deprived of all meaning and value. However, I argue that Nietzsche's critique of morality is not purely negative, and that his positive views are meant to overcome the threat of nihilism. I claim that the decadence of European-Christian culture prompted his nihilistic announcement of "the death of God". In place of metaphysics and as a reponse to nihilism, I argue that Nietzsche presents the Übermensch as one who signifies the ultimate affirmation of life by being capable of embracing the eternal recurrence (the idea that whatever happens, has happened an infinite number of times in the past, and will continue to happen infinitely, precisely in the same way as it is happening now). I will show that there is no effort on Nietzsche's part to reject past metaphysical narratives on the grounds that they are theoretically "false", and to offer his own "truer" version. Instead, I claim that Nietzsche's positive views are to be understood as a reaction against metaphysical philosophy, and that his rejection of any theoretically founded eternal transcendent perspective means that we are unable to discuss his positive views separate from how he situates his thinking historically. The interpretation defended here is that the idea of the eternal recurrence is an existential imperative, and that its acceptance will affect who we are as self-choosing beings. It is important to note, however, that following the imperative is not just living up to what one truly is in the sense of conforming to a transcendent or transcendental principle, but is an existential ontological self-transformation by an act of will in accord with one's sense of who one is or could be. And, in contrast to Kant's categorical imperative, no universal reason grounds this choice of self. The issue of the "truth" of Nietzsche's views can only be properly addressed in "existential" terms, where practical reason has primacy, or rather the distinction of theory and practice is not presumed to be absolute. In this thesis, I discuss Nietzsche's historical philosophizing which regards claims about truth as something that is revealed in situated action, and is ontologically prior to discourse about objective "truth". In addition, I explore some potential difficulties with Nietzsche's idea of the eternal recurrence serving as the highest formula of affirmation. Finally, I argue that despite Nietzsche's frequent references to himself as an "immoralist", his position is that we stand outside the realm of morality. In fact, his existential imperative is to be viewed as something other than morality. As a result, I claim that the English term "amoralism" better conveys to a contemporary English speaking readership the meaning of his project

than does the term "immoralism".

CHAPTER ONE:

NIETZSCHE'S EARLY VIEWS ON MORALITY

In this chapter I examine Nietzsche's early critique of morality (i.e. his "deconstruction" of morality), and argue that his "campaign" is an effort to show that morality is based on error in the sense that it places the source of value in some transcendent "beyond". In addition, I discuss Nietzsche's view of the concept of morality, and his theory of the origin of morality in order to develop an understanding of why Nietzsche claimed that the existence of moral judgments was dependent on the self-denying presumption to a transcendent ground. Further, I believe that an interpretation of Nietzsche's early critique of morality will serve as a basis for understanding the version expressed in his later works. In attempting to develop an understanding of Nietzsche's campaign against morality, it is necessary to come to terms with what exactly he was campaigning against. According to Nietzsche, there is no "essence" of morality in the strict sense, but he thinks that there is, so to speak, a family resemblance among the extant moral concepts (eg. they are all humanly created systems of value that misunderstand themselves by placing the source of value in some transcendent "beyond"). However, Nietzsche's attack on moral values in no way suggests that there is not a value outside morality (i.e. values that are not based on a transcendent source). As well, there is still the issue concerning why he chose Daybreak as the beginning of his campaign. Maudemarie Clark has pointed out that in Nietzsche's earlier work, Human, All-Too-Human, morality is described as an "error" indicating that there is evidence to suggest that the campaign actually began prior to Daybreak. She takes Nietzsche at his word, however, and explains that Human, All-Too-Human was not part of the campaign because Nietzsche was denying the existence of morality, and what he was calling an "error" was the belief that one can act from moral motives. I reject Clark's interpretation and argue that Nietzsche was not denying the existence of morality. Further, I claim that Nietzsche's use of "error" was consistent with his account of "error" in Daybreak (i.e. false beliefs). But, I argue that he was applying the notion of "erroneous belief" to different areas in each work, specifically to our metaphysical assumptions in Human, All-Too-Human, and to morality itself in Daybreak. As a result, I maintain that his thoughts on morality receive their first substantial expression in Human, All-Too-Human, but Nietzsche's campaign begins with Daybreak insofar as he was campaigning against morality, *not* metaphysics.[2]

Nietzsche teaches the activity of subjecting beliefs, particularly our moral beliefs, to a certain test. He claims that morality has never been given adequate reflection, and proceeds with his own investigation of morality. In doing so, he attempts to descend into the depths of morality to examine a subject that has been taken for granted at the surface, and where moral judgments have been accepted as indubitable facts. In seeming contrast

to metaphysics which presumes to ascend out of the cave, Nietzsche presumes to descend ever deeper. But, this does not involve a commitment to the cave against metaphysics. The real point for Nietzsche is that the division inside/outside, cave/true world is one that he rejects since it presumes the erroneous search for absolute values not of our creation. Nietzsche aims to develop his own skills of rumination by offering an account of the origin and development of various moral phenomena. His search for "origins" cannot then be "foundational" in the sense of a philosophical search for *archai*. Instead, his explanations are intended to show that human beings make moral judgments, and perform moral actions due to erroneous beliefs they hold (eg. that human beings err by believing that the ultimate source of value can be found in god, divine commands/etc.).

Nietzsche's view is that the very idea of moral judgment is based on error. His position must not be confused with the idea of making mistaken moral judgments. A parallel with Kant will clarify this distinction. According to Kant, moral judgments and moral actions are possible in virtue of a rational principle, the categorical imperative ("act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law"). Nietzsche, on the other hand, is arguing that we make moral judgments and perform moral actions because of error, rather than on the basis of a rational principle. The error, then, is not a mistake *about* the *real* rational basis of morality, but a mistake that there is such a thing as a rational basis. Nietzsche's criticism of Kant would be that there is no principle of morality, and hence, no such thing as morality. This means that the distinction between moral and non-moral as applied to actions and judgments cannot *in principle* be made. In fact, Nietzsche thinks that all moral philosophers have believed that they have provided "the" rational foundation of morality. But, he claims that these thinkers are simply offering ethnocentric rationalizations for the morality of their culture. According to Nietzsche, moral philosophers accept morality as such as given, rather than seriously questioning the history of moral values that have existed on earth.

In what respect is Daybreak a campaign against morality? Daybreak involves a "campaign" insofar as Nietzsche's examination is an effort "to undermine our faith in morality" by revealing that morality is based on error. But, the military language that Nietzsche uses to describe his critique of morality suggests that it is more than a mere "effort". Nietzsche's *Feldzug* (campaign), means literally, a military operation, and this language does have special significance. He identifies his campaign as a "*fight* against the morality that would unself man", and attempts to seek a "new morning...in a liberation from *all* moral values" (EH,III,D,2, my emphasis). As well, it is not uncommon for Nietzsche to use military language to express his attack on ideals (eg. TI,Pref).[3] For instance, he uses the word "war" metaphorically to describe his attack on the moral ideal when he writes: "I wage war against Christianity" (EH,I,7). In fact, Nietzsche even describes his nature as "warlike":

> War is another matter. I am warlike by nature. Attacking is one of my instincts. Being *able* to be an enemy, *being* an enemy-- perhaps that presupposes a strong nature; in any case, it belongs to every strong nature. (EH,I,7)

Nietzsche's choice of the words "*Feldzug*" and "war" suggests that his attack on morality is meant to combat the notion that there is such a thing as a rational basis for morality.

For Nietzsche, the prejudices of morality warrants such language. One must also realize that the issue that Nietzsche is dealing with is of such monumental importance that it is worth declaring war over. After all, Nietzsche is telling us that all morality is a sham, and that these values are the result of erroneous beliefs. By describing his campaign as a military operation, he is waging war against the idea that we can ground claims to moral validity in putatively universal and ahistorical standards of reasoning. So, Nietzsche's campaign against morality can be viewed as a battle, not that "it smells in the least of powder" (EH,III,D,1). The fact that Daybreak is one of his least polemical works does not indicate that it is not a campaign. Later, I will show that Nietzsche regards the existing morality, which is based on the belief in a transcendent "beyond", as a morality of altruism, and that this is the *only* morality.

There is one significant passage which offers a clear expression of the ways in which one can deny morality. It is here where we gain an understanding of Nietzsche's objections to morality:

> *There are two kinds of deniers of morality.*- 'To deny morality'- this can mean, *first*: to deny that the moral motives which men *claim* have inspired their actions really have done so- it is thus the assertion that morality consists of words and is among the coarser or more subtle deceptions (especially self-deceptions) which men practise, and is perhaps so especially in precisely the case of those most famed for virtue. *Then* it can mean: to deny that moral judgments are based on truths. Here it is admitted that they really are motives of action, but that in this way it is *errors* which, as the basis of all moral judgment, impel men to their moral actions. This is *my* point of view: though I should be the last to deny that *in very many cases* there is some ground for suspicion that the other point of view- that is to say, the point of view of La Rochefoucauld[4] and others who think like him- may also be justified and in any event of great general application.- Thus I deny morality as I deny alchemy, that is, I deny their premises: but I do not deny that there have been alchemists who believed in these premises and acted in accordance with them.- I also deny immorality: *not* that countless people *feel* themselves to be immoral, but there is any *true* reason so to feel. It goes without saying that I do not deny unless I am a fool- that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged- but I think that the one should be encouraged and the other avoided *for other reasons than hitherto*. We have to *learn to think differently*-in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: *to feel differently*. (D,103)

Nietzsche's rejection of morality amounts to a denial of all moral premises. His campaign against morality would thus be an effort to defend the view that there cannot be transcendent rational truths to found morality. But, *prima facie*, it appears that Nietzsche is contradicting himself by reintroducing an "ought". To claim that certain actions "ought" to be done or avoided suggests that Nietzsche is offering an alternative principle of morality, rather than rejecting the very idea of a principle of morality. I am going to assume, however, that Nietzsche was not a fool. He was not contradicting himself because he was *not actually* reintroducing an "ought". Nietzsche emphatically denies any "ought" for morality (see HH,34;WP,332). What is rejected is not this or that reason or

reasons for acting morally (or immorally), but the whole range of possible rational justifications. As well, Nietzsche is rejecting a singular model of human being which this error has served to found (i.e. the *eternal* human being towards whom all things in the world have had a natural relationship from the time she began). Given his denial of any "ought" for morality, the issue then is whether one could consciously reside in "untruth". Nietzsche, however, is optimistic that living in "untruth" will not necessarily result in a mode of thought that will lead, on a personal level, to despair. Instead, he writes: "In the end one would live among men and with oneself as in *nature*, without praising, blaming, contending, gazing contentedly...upon many things for which one formerly felt only fear...One would be free of emphasis, and no longer prodded by the idea that one is only nature or more than nature" (HH,34). Nietzsche is presenting an alternative life to the one displayed by those human beings committed to the belief in transcendent rational truths. So, when he claims that "we have to think differently-- in order at last...to feel differently" (D,103), I think that what he has in mind is a new, anti-metaphysical mode of thought which would replace all thinking in a transcendent "beyond". This is a crucial point because it indicates that the relation between morality and metaphysics (which serves as the source of moral values) would be severed.

What does Nietzsche mean by denying moral premises? It seems to me that his denial of moral premises is in keeping with his claim that "it is errors which, as the basis of all moral judgment, impel men to their moral actions" (D,103). Nietzsche identifies these "errors" as the "moral premises", and maintains that the erroneous notion that there is a transcendent source of values has motivated human beings to make moral judgments, and then act in accordance with these judgments. It must be remembered that Nietzsche is not commanding us to do away with morality, but instead hopes to provide such a persuasive critique of morality that his reader will reach the same conclusion. Clark writes, "If Nietzsche is right that our moral judgments and actions are motivated by false beliefs, a reader who draws the same conclusion will no longer have the motivation for engaging in these activities-- assuming that he is rational and not likely to be motivated by beliefs he regards as false."[5] Nietzsche's task is to convince the reader that he has successfully unmasked morality by offering explanations which demonstrates its deceptive nature. These explanations are to be found in his account of the origin and development of morality discussed in the remainder of the book.

So far I have shown that, for Nietzsche, the existence of morality depends upon the fact that humans accept the beliefs that he terms the "premises" of morality. And, Nietzsche's rejection of moral premises is simply the claim that there is no transcendent "beyond" to ground claims to moral validity. What does Nietzsche regard as a "moral action"? He may not explicitly state what actions are moral, but he does reveal pertinent information regarding moral actions.

> If only those actions are moral which are performed for the sake of another and only for his sake, as one definition has it, then there are no moral actions! If only those actions are moral which are performed out of freedom of will, as another definition has it, then there are likewise no moral actions!- What is it then which is so *named* and which in any event exists and wants explaining? It is the effects of certain **intellectual mistakes**. (D,148, emphasis added)

Nietzsche does not answer the question "what is a moral action?", except to say that moral actions are "the effects of certain intellectual mistakes." I think that Nietzsche's point is that all morality is a product of mistakes, specifically intellectual mistakes (eg. accepting values as transcendent which are only ever our own creation). He is merely echoing his remark from §103 of Daybreak, "errors impel men to their moral actions" when he writes that moral actions are "the effects of certain intellectual mistakes". Consequently, he seems to be claiming that there would be no moral actions if one could remove the error (i.e. the notion that there is such a thing as a rational basis of morality). Nietzsche still believes that moral actions exist, but only on account of errors. He is not claiming his approach offers a truer picture of things. Instead, Nietzsche is deconstructing morality by showing the error that motivates us to make moral judgments and to perform "moral acts".

Nietzsche does not prescribe a way for us to identify the moral actions that are a result of these mistakes. His view is that all moral judgments are based on error, and if someone wishes to challenge this claim, she will have to give an example of a moral judgment that is based on a true belief. Nietzsche would then defend his position by pointing out the false belief (i.e. the erroneous premise) that has given rise to this individual's moral judgment. But, he is not claiming that underlying false beliefs is a truer picture of things. Nietzsche is deconstructing morality by showing that the beliefs that motivate us to make moral judgments and to perform "moral acts" are false.

The question still remains "what is a moral action"? According to Nietzsche, morality errs by placing the source of value in a transcendent "beyond", but this says nothing about what constitutes a "moral action". However, he does offer a general account of how we arrive at our actions.

> *Our evaluations.*- All actions may be traced back to evaluations, all evaluations are either *original* or *adopted*- the latter being by far the most common. Why do we adopt them? From fear- that is to say, we consider it more advisable to pretend they are our own- and accustom ourself to this pretense, so that at length it becomes our own nature. Original evaluation: that is to say, to assess a thing according to the extent to which it pleases or displeases us alone and no one else- something excessively rare!- But must our evaluation of another, in which there lies the motive for our generally availing ourselves of *his* evaluation, at least not proceed from *us*, be our *own* determination? Yes, but we arrive at it as *children*, and rarely learn to change our view; most of us are our whole lives long the fools of the way we acquired in childhood of judging our neighbours (their minds, rank, morality, whether they are exemplary or reprehensible) and of finding it necessary to pay homage to their evaluations. (D,104)

For Nietzsche, moral actions clearly belong to adopted evaluations, and we are inculcated with these evaluations from childhood. This means that we no longer make our "own" valuations (i.e. we no longer decide how to act on the basis of the pleasure we expect to receive from it). If we consider, for instance, how children acquire their sense of right and wrong, it will become apparent that it is from an adopted valuation. According to Nietzsche, when a child discerns that lying is wrong, it is because the parents have passed on their values to the child. Having been taught these values, the child adopts the

same attitude as the parents. Note, however, that if the child accepts the parents' valuation out of fear that disobedience will result in punishment, her actions are based on her own valuation, and thus do not constitute an adopted valuation. When a value judgment expressing an internalized attitude motivates an action, it is based on an adopted valuation. The same process applies to moral valuations. Our moral judgments, too, would be an expression of internalized attitudes, and hence would be classified as an adopted valuation. Nietzsche's point is that the realm of moral motivation is identical with the realm of adopted valuations. And, it is no accident that this passage directly follows Nietzsche's discussion of two ways of denying morality (D,103). It is evident that the moral judgments which "impel men to their moral actions" (D,103) are adopted valuations.

Nietzsche seems to think that the motivating judgments for all moral actions are adopted valuations. His conception of the origin of morality (*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*; the morality of mores) also serves as an example of an adopted valuation.

> *Concept of morality of custom.*- In comparison with the mode of life of whole millenia of mankind we present-day men live in a very immoral age: the power of custom is astonishingly enfeebled and the moral sense so rarefied and lofty it may be described as having more or less evaporated. That is why the fundamental insights into the origin of morality are so difficult for us latecomers, and even when we have acquired them we find it impossible to enunciate them, because they sound so uncouth or because they seem to slander morality! This is, for example, already the case with the *chief proposition:* morality is nothing other (therefore *no more*!) than obedience to customs, of whatever kind they may be; customs, however, are the *traditional* way of behaving and evaluating. In things in which no tradition commands there is no morality; and the less life is determined by tradition, the smaller the circle of morality. The free human being is immoral because in all things he is *determined* to depend upon himself and not upon a tradition: in all the original conditions of mankind, 'evil', 'free', 'capricious', 'unusual', 'unforeseen', 'incalculable'. Judged by the standard of these conditions, if an action is performed *not* because tradition commands it but for other motives (because of its usefulness to the individual, for example), even indeed for precisely the motives which once founded the tradition, it is called immoral and is felt to be so by him who performed it: for it was not performed in obedience to tradition. What is tradition? A higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is *useful* to us, but because it *commands*.- What distinguishes this feeling in the presence of tradition from the feeling of fear in general? It is fear in the presence of a higher intellect which here commands, of an incomprehensible, indefinite power, of something more than personal- there is *superstition* in this fear.- Originally all education and care of health, marriage, cure of sickness, agriculture, war, speech and silence, traffic with another and with the gods belonged within the domain of morality: they demanded one observe prescriptions *without thinking of oneself* as an individual. Originally, therefore, everything was custom, and whoever wanted to elevate himself above it had to become lawgiver and medicine man and a kind of demi-god: that is to

say, he had to *make customs*- a dreadful, mortally dangerous thing! (D,9)

In the above passage, Nietzsche traces the origin of morality to custom, and claims that obedience to tradition provided the moral motivation for primitive human beings. According to Nietzsche, moral behavior includes more than mere conformity to tradition since one must act from the motive of obedience. If one acts according to the tradition because it is useful, then this would not be classified as a moral action. Clark points out that Nietzsche's account of the origin of morality was apparently influenced "by the etymological connection between 'Sittlichkeit' (morality) and 'Sitte' (custom or more)".[6] Given his background as a philologist, it is reasonable to assume that Nietzsche was certainly aware of the etymological connection. And, although this would explain why he regarded primitive customs as a "morality", his primary concern is with the motives which inspire moral actions, rather than etymological information.

To begin with, Nietzsche remarks that the power of custom dominated the thinking of primitive human beings. His point is that these humans accepted the mores simply because it was tradition, and in doing so, they were not making their own valuations. Instead, their actions were based on adopted valuations. Nietzsche writes:

> Custom represents the experiences of men of earlier times as to what they supposed useful and harmful-- but the *sense for custom* (morality) applies, not to these experiences as such, but to the age, sanctity, the indiscussability of the custom. (D,19)

The customs of primitive human beings were based on their own experience and interests. Initially, these humans discovered causal connections. For instance, they may have discovered that certain berries were poisonous, and decided not to eat them to avoid becoming ill. Eventually, however, this practice becomes part of the tradition and acquires the status of custom (one refrains from eating certain berries not because they are harmful to one's health, but because it is proscribed). If one avoids eating these berries not because it is proscribed by tradition, but from its original motive which resulted in the tradition in the first place (i.e. if one avoids eating certain berries to avoid becoming ill), then the action is deemed immoral (D,9). According to the earliest standards, to be moral, one must accept the traditional valuation regardless of whether these values coincide with one's own interests. Obedience to custom, then, serves as one example of an adopted valuation.

In regard to the morality of mores representing an adopted valuation, the internalized attitude would be what Nietzsche refers to as "this feeling in the presence of tradition", and believing that tradition represents a "higher authority". But, why is this authority obeyed? It is obeyed for one reason, "because it *commands*" (D,9). What generates this feeling of reverence for the authority of the mores? Nietzsche's response is that "it is fear in the presence of a higher intellect", but adds that "there is *superstition* in this fear" (D,9). Note, however, that Nietzsche is not using the term "fear" to denote a person's concern to avoid the harm followed by one's actions. In this particular instance, the person would only be concerned with her own interests. As a result, this is not an example of an adopted valuation. Instead, Nietzsche uses the word "fear" to represent the feeling of dread or reverence towards the tradition. In this case, the person's attention is not directed towards her own interests, nor to any attempt to

calculate the consequences of her actions. The individual obeys the tradition from an inexplicable conviction that disobedience will result in something disastrous.

The reverence felt towards one's custom (mores) is discussed further in §10 of Daybreak.

> *Sense for morality and sense for causality in counteraction.*- In the same measure as the sense for causality increases, the extent of the domain of morality decreases: for each time one has understood the necessary effects and has learned how to segregate them from all the accidental effects and incidental consequences (*post hoc*), one has destroyed a countless number of *imaginary causalities* hitherto believed in as the foundations of customs- the real world is much smaller than the imaginary- and each time a piece of anxiety and constraint has vanished from the world, each time too a piece of respect for the authority of custom: morality as a whole has suffered a diminution. He who wants, on the contrary, to augment it must know how to prevent the results from being *subject to control*. (D,10)

Primitive human beings' believing in "imaginary causalities" is what generated the reverence for the authority of the mores. Nietzsche still thinks, however, that the belief in these "imaginary causalities" depends on the validity of moral prescriptions. A moral prescription is valid if it succeeds in doing what it promised. Nietzsche provides an example to illustrate his point. He asks us to consider the prescription: "one must not throw animal bones into the fire or give them to dogs". This prescription is validated by: "if you do so you will have no luck in hunting" (D,24). But, one seldom has luck in hunting anyway! Nietzsche's point is that it is difficult to refute the validity of certain prescriptions because something usually happens to confirm the authority of the mores. In any event, Nietzsche maintains that there is always "superstitution" involved in this feeling of reverence for the authority of the mores (D,9). Thus, tradition itself is not a transcendent source of value, but the reverence that gives rise to the tradition requires a belief in "imaginary causalities" (i.e. a transcendent "beyond").

Nietzsche is critical of the morality of mores for the same reason that he rejects "all moral judgments" (D,103). He denies the moral premises of the morality of mores. Specifically, he claims that the beliefs regarding traditional valuations that impel individuals to their moral actions are based on error. The error involves accepting the notion of imaginary causalities (eg. the belief that misfortunes are the result of gods who are angered by the violation of a custom, see D,33). But, Nietzsche points out that once one develops an understanding of causal connections in the world, the domain of morality decreases. However, he is not referring to the morality of mores when he writes that "all moral judgments" are based on error (D,103), and that moral actions are the product of "intellectual mistakes" (D,148). Nietzsche's remarks about morality in general coincide nicely with his discussion of the morality of mores, but he is careful to draw a distinction between today's morality and the morality of mores. In addition, Nietzsche emphasizes that moral judgments have shifted over time (D,131).

In his discussion of the morality of mores, Nietzsche asserts that the *current* moral sense is so "rarefied and lofty" that it is difficult for us latecomers to appreciate the fundamental insights into the origin of morality (D,9). At this point, he is turning his attention away from the origin of morality to consider the current morality. In doing so,

Nietzsche is examining the existing morality which, like all morality, is a product of the mistaken notion that there is a transcendent source of value to found morality. But, what is the "rarefied and lofty" moral authority that has replaced custom? Nietzsche claims that human beings now regard "the sympathetic, disinterested, generally useful social actions to be the *moral* actions" due to the effects of Christianity (D,132). He argues that our current conception of morality is:

> the residuum of Christian states of mind left when the very much antithetical, strictly egoistic fundamental belief in the "one needful thing", in the absolute importance of eternal *personal* salvation, together with the dogmas upon which it rested, gradually retreated and the subsidiary belief in "love", in "love of one's neighbour", in concert with the tremendous practical effect of ecclesiastical charity, was thereby pushed into the foreground. (D,132)

Nietzsche explains that today's morality of altruism is an offshoot of Christianity. He thinks that we have yet to achieve a complete liberation from Christian dogma due to its lingering aftereffects. He also points out that a philanthropic state of mind continued to persist among those who rejected Christianity. According to Nietzsche, the French *libre-penseurs* from Voltaire to Comte merely attempted to "outchristian Christianity" with the moral formula, *vivre pour autrui*.[7] As well, he notes that Germany had Schopenhauer to advance the teaching of the sympathetic affections (eg. pity, *Mitleiden*), while England had John Stuart Mill to advance the utilitarian standard of morality, the promotion of the general happiness through empathy. Nietzsche is not claiming that these philosophers had any influence in determining the current morality, but conversely that the existing morality actually influenced them. He claims that these examples reveal a major prejudice: "that one *knows* what really constitutes the moral" (D,132). All the moral standards discussed above are simply remnants of Christian ideals. Nietzsche is certainly not claiming that altruism originated with Christianity, but instead his point is that Christian dogma had such a powerful and lasting effect, particularly on the European mind, that its principle of altruism is engrained in our thoughts. As a result, Nietzsche is able to explain why we identify morality as altruism. I do not think that Nietzsche is offering a limited view of the existing morality when he describes it as a morality of selflessness. Kai Nielsen agrees and adds: "This morality of 'turning the other cheek,' this morality of mercy, humility and meekness is indeed, culturally speaking, our official morality."[8]

In §174 of Daybreak Nietzsche continues to reflect on the current conception of morality. He writes: "Moral actions are actions performed out of sympathy for others" and "only those actions which tend towards the common security are to be accorded the predicate 'good'" (D,174). Traditions are still a part of the lives of many people, but these are simply "customs" and do not constitute a morality. Nietzsche's position is that the current morality (an altruistic morality) has replaced the authority of tradition as the source of morality with the authority of conscience (or, for the religious, the authority of god). Further, he maintains that the authority of god and conscience requires a belief in imaginary causalities. Nietzsche claims that this belief in imaginary causalities gives rise to the feeling of reverence in the face of an incomprehensible "higher intellect" and thus gives to our judgments that an action is "moral" their moral force. These imaginary

causalities are the premises of morality, and when individuals act out of reverence it is due to the fact that they make "intellectual mistakes". Individuals consider certain acts "right" or "wrong" because these intellectual mistakes provide a feeling of reverence (a feeling that certain things "ought" to be done). These mistakes enable them to judge the moral worth of persons according to the person's obedience to the dictates of a higher intellect. But, the acceptance of this morality involves the abandonment of one's own valuations and embraces the commands of an apparent "higher intellect". Nietzsche's "liberation from all moral values", however, entails a liberation from reverence and a commitment to one's own valuations.

So far I have discussed Nietzsche's view of the concept of morality, and his theory of the origin of morality in order to show why he claimed that the existence of moral judgments was based on error. Despite arguing that the origin of morality lies in custom or mores (see D,9;HH,96), Nietzsche was careful to draw a distinction between the morality of mores and an altruistic morality. He claims that altruism is the current morality, and it owes its existence to the acceptance of a transcendent source of values. In reflecting on his discussion of the morality of mores from Human, All-Too-Human, Nietzsche claims, "that much older and more primitive species of morality which differs *toto caelo* from the altruistic mode of evaluation" (GM,Pref.4). In addition, we learn that in Nietzsche's early writings his fundamental concern was not the origin of morality. He admits:

> Even then [1877] my real concern was something much more important than hypothesis-mongering, whether my own or other people's, on the origin of morality...What was especially at stake was the value of the "unegoistic," the instincts of pity, self-abnegation, self-sacrifice...But it was against precisely *these* instincts that there ever spoke from me an ever more fundamental mistrust, an ever more corrosive skepticism! It was precisely here that I saw the *great* danger to mankind. (GM,Pref.5)

What is important for Nietzsche is not simply the fact that the origin of morality can be traced to custom, or that morality is now regarded as altruism (selflessness), but questioning the *value* of the instincts associated with the "unegoistic" (eg. pity, self-sacrifice). Why does he think that these seemingly harmless instincts represent the "great danger to mankind" (GM,Pref.5)?

Nietzsche's critique of the unegoistic instincts includes a reference to the ancient moralists:

> *Fashions in morality.*- ...The great men of antique morality, Epictetus for instance, knew nothing of the now normal glorification of thinking of others, of living for others; in the light of our moral fashion they would have to be called downright immoral, for they strove with all their might *for* their *ego* and *against* feeling with others (that is to say, with the sufferings and moral frailties of others). Perhaps they would reply to us: 'If you are so boring or ugly an object to yourself, by all means think of others more than of yourself! It is right you should!' (D,131)

Nietzsche's point is not that the ancients were selfish, but that their goal was self-perfection, as opposed to running away from themselves. His critique of altruism is

certainly not new, as he realized that most great philosophers of the past were agreed on the unworthiness of pity (see D,132;GM,Pref.5).

> Nietzsche examines the instinct of pity, and begins by asking these two questions: Is it good for you yourselves to be above all full of pity? And is it good for those who suffer? (GS,338)

For Nietzsche, pity is detrimental for both those who feel it, and for those who are being pitied. To begin with, the pitying person wants to *help*, but fails to understand the "entire economy of the soul". This person does not appreciate the "personal necessity of distress" (GS,338). She regards suffering as something that is evil, and not deserved. According to Nietzsche, there is no value in pitying someone because it does not assist the pitied towards her own well-being or self-perfection. Instead, pity causes suffering, and in doing so, is actually a weakness. It can be viewed as a principle of action which demands that one "suffer from another's ill-fortune *as* he himself suffers" (D,137). Thus, it is not a sign of nobility to feel pity:

> How is it possible to keep on one's own way? Constantly, some clamor or other calls us aside; rarely does our eye behold anything that does not require us to drop our own preoccupation instantly to help...All such arousing of pity and calling for help is secretly seductive, for our "own way" is too hard and demanding and too remote from the love and gratitude of others...we do not really mind escaping from it. (GS,338)

A person becomes side-tracked when having to contend with their emotion of pity. For Nietzsche, feeling pity is not only a hindrance, but also serves as an outlet for those who are unable to focus on their own path. It becomes easier to help others than to make something of yourself. Perhaps, Nietzsche's most important claim against pity is made at the end of §338 of The Gay Science, "I want to teach them what is understood by so few today, least of all by these preachers of pity: *to share not suffering but joy*".

Nietzsche devoted much effort to discussion of unegoistic actions, and explicitly denied the possibility of an "unegoistic action". He states:

> a being capable of nothing but unegoistic actions is more fabulous than the phoenix; it cannot even be imagined clearly, if only because under strict examination the whole concept of 'unegoistic action' vanishes into thin air. (HH,133)

Nietzsche accepts the current conception of morality-- an act is moral if it is performed solely for the sake of another person (altruism), but insists that this criterion of moral worth is defective since there are no unegoistic acts. But, if there are no unegoistic actions, is there no morality? After all, an egoistic action is certainly not a moral action. Does this mean that Nietzsche denies the existence of moral actions altogether? I think that Nietzsche's view is that altruism (unegoistic acts) is an untenable position, but in a sense, he is not denying the existence of unegoistic acts, and hence rejecting morality. According to my interpretation, Nietzsche is arguing that unegoistic acts exist in the *minds* of human beings (i.e. people believe in selfless acts) because humans do not recognize that their so-called "moral actions" are based on the erroneous notion that altruism possesses some "higher status". Similarly, Nietzsche writes:

> If only those actions are moral which are performed for the sake of another and

> only for his sake, as one definition has it, then there are no moral actions! (D,148)

Later in the same passage Nietzsche explains that these actions are the result of "intellectual mistakes". So, for Nietzsche, we can still talk of altruistic acts even though they owe their existence to error. Altruism is simply the morality that has resulted from the acceptance of a transcendent "beyond" as the source of value.

Nietzsche's critique of a morality of altruism extends beyond the claim that it is based on error. In addition, he argues that a selfless morality is, in principle, contradictory. Nietzsche writes:

> a man's virtues are called *good* depending on their probable consequences not for him but for us and society: the praise of virtues has always been far from "selfless," far from "unegoistic."...this praise certainly was not born from the spirit of selflessness. The "neighbor" praises selflessness *because it brings him advantages*...Thus what is really praised when virtues are praised is, first, their instrumental nature and, secondly, the instinct in every virtue that refuses to be held in check by the over-all advantage for the individual himself. (GS,21)

According to Nietzsche, the contradiction involving an unegoistic morality is that, on the one hand, a selfless act can only be performed through self-sacrifice which includes the renouncing of one's own advantage. But, once the neighbor (or society) encourages altruism *for the sake of its utility* it no longer involves a renunciation of one's own advantage. Instead, the principle that now applies is "You shall seek your advantage even at the expense of everything else" (GS,21). Hence, these actions are being performed for the sake of another due to their utility, and not from their intended motive of selflessness.

Earlier, I examined Nietzsche's account of how we arrive at our actions, and applied it specifically to moral actions. For Nietzsche, our moral judgments are adopted valuations in the sense that they are expressions of internalized attitudes. The basic idea behind adopted valuations is that morality is conventional, and that we learn moral values through habit, or social conditioning. But, in my previous discussion of adopted valuations, I simply alluded to one example (i.e. the internalization of parental attitudes) to show how children acquire values. However, given Nietzsche's conception of morality, it would appear that actions based on adopted valuations correspond to "unegoistic" actions. Today's morality indicates that we are being inculcated with a morality of altruism. Now, the question becomes "how is this possible?" I think Nietzsche attempts to answer this question in two ways. To begin with, he offers a critique of the current image of humans beings. Secondly, he offers a description of *who* is responsible for this "moral" education.

The target of much of Nietzsche's criticism of human beings was their lack of self-questioning, and the absense of an instinct for reflective thought. He claims that "*the great majority of people lacks an intellectual conscience*", and he finds nothing more contemptible than those who "stand in the midst of this *rerum concordia discors*[9] and of this whole marvelous uncertainty and rich ambiguity of existence *without questioning* [it]" (GS,2). Those who accept traditional valuations from habit, or from blind faith lack an intellectual conscience. And, since Nietzsche describes the acquisition of one's moral

values as from habit (adopted valuations), he is claiming that these individuals lack an intellectual conscience. In other words, he is attributing our moral sense to a deficiency of character. He writes:

> you have never thought much about yourself and simply have accepted blindly that what you had been *told* ever since childhood was right... (GS,335)

For Nietzsche, the majority of people are content to live their lives without even troubling themselves about the reasons for their beliefs, and valuations. Although his criticism is non-discriminatory, I focus on how it applies specifically to one's "moral" thinking. In fact, the absense of critical thinking involving *moral valuations* is Nietzsche's most popular example.

Nietzsche claims that an outside source is partly responsible for the individual's lack of self-questioning. He describes the "teachers of the purpose of existence", and explains how these "ethical teachers" have taken away from people the need for reflection on moral matters. Of course, this "outside source" is not itself a purportedly transcendent source; it is a human influence. These teachers have their influence because they announce a transcendent source and because their teachings keep the species going. The ethical teachers seem to be interested in preaching, or legislating morality which prevents individuals from developing their own thoughts on the subject of morality. To begin with, Nietzsche claims that ethical teachers have an instinct for the preservation of the species, and at times this instinct "erupts as reason and as passion". When this happens, the ethical teacher attempts to provide a rationale behind the idea that "life is worth living" so that it will appear as though there is a purpose in life. And, in doing so, she is able to impress upon others the seriousness of existence. Nietzsche explains:

> the ethical teacher comes on stage, as the teacher of the purpose of existence; and to this end he invents a second, different existence and unhinges by means of his new mechanics the old, ordinary existence. Indeed, he wants to make sure that we do not *laugh* at existence, or at ourselves-- or at him...His inventions and valuations may be utterly foolish and overenthusiastic; he may misjudge the course of nature and deny its conditions...(GS,1)

According to Nietzsche, there have been many teachers of the purpose of existence who have come and gone, but "human nature has nevertheless been changed by the ever new appearance of these teachers of the purpose of existence: It now has one additional need--the need for the ever new appearance of such teachers and teachings of a 'purpose'" (GS,1). He claims that human beings have acquired a need to know *why* they exist, but rely on others (the ethical teachers) to "educate" them on moral matters. Nietzsche's point is that people have a history of putting their trust in these ethical teachers for answers to life, which means that these teachers are doing the thinking for the individual. However, what is being taught is that there really is a transcendent "beyond" which serves as the source of value. Nietzsche rejects this view, and encourages individuals to engage in their own critical thinking.

Is Nietzsche's low opinion of human beings justified? Doesn't he underestimate the individual's power of rumination? After all, it appears as though moral philosophers are not under the influence of an adopted valuation, since they argue that acting in accord with the moral principles they advocate is ultimately in one's own self-interest, and that

only the ignorant act against morality in favor of their (narrowly) perceived benefit. Presumably, moral philosophers could claim that their "own" valuation involves what they accept as moral on the basis of rational argument, and acting in accord with these principles. Nietzsche's denial of morality, however, implies that there cannot be a transcendent rational truth to found morality. As well, it is worth noting that Nietzsche keeps his critique of morality (a system of life-negating values according to which life is lived) separate from moral philosophy (the attempt to justify some particular system of such values). When Nietzsche attacks the manner in which humans acquire their moral sense (i.e. from adopted valuation) and the generally obtuse nature of people, he is referring to the existing morality, the morality that is actually *lived*, and which in his view is a morality of altruism.

In this chapter I have examined Nietzsche's view of the concept of morality, and his theory of the origin of morality in order to show that he is rejecting morality because of its self-denying presumption to a transcendent ground. The error lies in accepting values as transcendent which are only ever our own creation. As well, I claimed that this error gave birth to the morality of altruism. In addition, I have discussed an additional feature of morality that Nietzsche found objectionable. In questioning the value of morality, Nietzsche concluded that the "unegoistic" instincts (eg. self-sacrifice, pity) were a danger insofar as they proved to be an impediment to one's well-being. These claims comprise Nietzsche's opposition to morality, but they seem to find their first substantial expression in Human, All-Too-Human, the work that preceded Daybreak. If this is the case, then one must give serious thought to Nietzsche's claim that Daybreak marked the beginning of his campaign against morality.

When Nietzsche wrote on Daybreak, "With this book my campaign against morality begins" (EH,III,D.1), he was certainly aware that Human, All-Too-Human had already contained discussion of his views on morality. It would appear then that Nietzsche regards Daybreak as a beginning, insofar as it begins a "campaign" as opposed to some other sort of discussion of morality. If this is an accurate assessment, then an examination of Human, All-Too-Human should reveal that it contains no discussion of Nietzsche's claim that morality is based on error as described in Daybreak. After all, if it could be shown that Nietzsche's attack on morality in Human, All-Too-Human is identical to the one expressed in Daybreak, then this would indicate that his campaign against morality originates with Human, All-Too-Human.

Maudemarie Clark claims that Nietzsche (in Human, All-Too-Human) views morality as altruistic acts, and that since he denies altruistic acts, he is denying morality.[10] She cites this passage:

> a being capable of nothing but unegoistic actions is more fabulous than the phoenix; it cannot even be imagined clearly, if only because under strict examination the whole concept of "unegoistic action" vanishes into thin air. (HH,133)

Clark is correct in identifying Nietzsche's conception of morality as altruism. However, Nietzsche is not denying the plausibility of a moral action anymore than he is when he writes:

> If only those actions are moral which are performed for the sake of another and

> only for his sake, as one definition has it, then there are no moral actions! (D,148)

But, Nietzsche goes on to explain that these actions are the result of "intellectual mistakes". I argue that the passage quoted from Human, All-Too-Human (§133) is making the same point, that unegoistic acts exist due to error. Nietzsche is only saying that the "***concept*** of 'unegoistic action' vanishes into thin air" which is why he is still able to claim that unegoistic acts exist, but on account of error. In fact, Human, All-Too-Human regards morality as a "lie" and an "error" (HH,39,40) which suggests that its views are similar to the ones expressed in Daybreak. Further, my interpretation is able to account for Nietzsche's concern about the "value of the 'unegoistic'" by showing that unegoistic acts do exist, albeit due to error (GM,Pref.5). On Clark's interpretation, Nietzsche is denying the existence of unegoistic acts, but if that were the case, how could these apparently "non-existent" acts represent, for Nietzsche, the "great danger to mankind" (GM,Pref.5)?

Although I explained that Human, All-Too-Human and Daybreak both regard morality as an error, this does not demonstrate that Human, All-Too-Human began Nietzsche's campaign against morality. So far I have not shown that what he labeled an "error" in Human, All-Too-Human was consistent with his use of "error" in Daybreak where he claimed that morality owes its existence to erroneous beliefs. As a result, it is necessary to examine Nietzsche's conception of "error" in Human, All-Too-Human. In Ecce Homo he offers an explanation of the book's title: "'where *you* see ideal things, **I** see what is human, alas, all-too-human!'--I know man better" (EH,III,HH,1). As well, Nietzsche adds that in this book you will find:

> a merciless spirit that knows all the hideouts where the ideal is at home...One **error** after another is coolly placed on ice; the ideal is not refuted-- it *freezes* to death.-- Here, for example, "the genius" freezes to death; at the next corner, "the saint"; under a huge icicle, "the hero"; in the end; "faith," so-called "conviction"; "pity" also cools down considerably-- and almost everywhere "the thing in itself" freezes to death. (EH,III,HH,1)

The aim of this work was to "overcome metaphysics", a project that included the overturning of traditional valuations that mislead the human mind. In the above passage, Nietzsche emphasizes that these "ideals" are merely based on human standards, and hence do not possess the "higher" status that they are usually accorded. The overturning of traditional valuations means overturning the presumption that these valuations, which *we make*, are really 'God' given or founded outside our will.

In regard to ideals in general, Nietzsche's task was to explain how the characteristics of an ideal which made it appear "higher" were actually the expression of a basic psychological need that could easily be discerned as lower (as "human, all-too-human"). Nietzsche explicitly states that "the ideal is not refuted-- it *freezes* to death", and he clearly describes his approach as "psychological observation" or "reflection on the human, all-too-human" (EH,III,HH,1;HH,35). He used psychological observation as a weapon to slay metaphysics. Or, as Nietzsche describes it, an axe is applied to "the root of the 'metaphysical need' of man" (HH,37). The "higher" is now explicated in terms of the merely human, and there is no longer any concern about whether a

metaphysical realm possesses any veridical worth. Once the historical and psychological justification that resides in such ideals has been grasped, a liberation from metaphysics is complete.

It must be emphasized that Nietzsche is not denying the existence of a metaphysical world. Rather than discussing the issue of the truth or falsity of such a world, his project is intended to explain why a belief in a metaphysical world exists. In an often overlooked passage, Nietzsche writes:

> Metaphysical world.-- It is true, there **could** be a metaphysical world; the absolute possibility of it is hardly to be disputed. We behold all things through the human head and cannot cut off this head; while the question nonetheless remains what of the world would still be there if one had cut it off. This is a purely scientific problem and one not very well calculated to bother people overmuch; but all that has hitherto made these assumptions *valuable, terrible, delightful* to them, all that has begotten these assumptions, is passion, **error**, and self-deception...When one has disclosed these methods as the foundation of all extant religions and metaphysical systems, one has refuted them! Then that possibility still remains over; but one can do nothing with it, not to speak of letting happiness, salvation, and life depend on the gossamer of such a possibility.-- For one could assert nothing at all of the metaphysical world except that it was a being-other, an inaccessible, incomprehensible being-other. (HH,9, bold added)

According to Nietzsche, all that we could possibly know about a metaphysical world is that it is a "being-other", and as a result, this "knowledge" could not serve human beings in any capacity. Nietzsche's point is that we must dispense with reference to a metaphysical world due to the fact that "metaphysical assumptions" are erroneous. But, in what sense are these assumptions false? I think Nietzsche is claiming that the existence of idealizations is dependent on the self-denying presumption to a transcendent ground. (i.e. the notion that idealizations represent some "higher status" when in actuality they can be explained in terms of psychological observation, the human, all-too-human). By dropping the metaphysical perspective, Nietzsche is limiting himself to offering strictly naturalistic explanations for metaphysical assumptions. In his view, these idealizations (eg. "the saint", "faith", "pity") do not give descriptions of natural phenomena that are even remotely possible. They only appear to be plausible descriptions if one first assumes a metaphysical world. As a result, he cannot explain why people accept metaphysical assumptions by pointing to evidence which leads them to do so. Of course, those individuals who accept these assumptions claim to have evidence to support their use; but to do so they must appeal to supernatural avenues to knowledge (eg. revelation), which Nietzsche's assumption rules out. It is difficult, however, to say what "evidence" could mean in the case of "faith" within a naturalistic perspective. Nietzsche thinks that the only alternative to explaining metaphysical assumptions on the basis of evidence for them is to explain why a belief in a metaphysical world exists. And, his response is that error has begotten these assumptions.

Despite the fact that Nietzsche seems to view "error" as the acceptance of a transcendent "beyond" in Daybreak (§103) and Human, All-Too-Human (§9), there are

striking differences. For instance, when he discusses error in Daybreak, he is referring to the notion of a transcendent "beyond", and how it motivates our moral judgments and moral actions. Nietzsche was attempting to "undermine our faith in morality" by revealing that morality is based on error. However, in Human, All-Too-Human his task was to overcome metaphysics. And, he alluded to art, religion, and morality as activities that are to be explained without relying on metaphysical terms. He described all idealizations as based on "error" in the sense that people mistakenly believe that these idealizations belong to a metaphysical realm, and possess some "higher status". Nietzsche's naturalistic explanation, what he called "psychological observation", was intended to show that the characteristics of an ideal which made it seem "higher" were actually the expression of a basic psychological need that could be discerned as lower (as "human, all-too-human"). In this case, "unegoism" is denied its "higher status". So, according to Nietzsche, the principles underlying the critique of morality in Human, All-Too-Human, are the specific weapon to uproot our "metaphysical need". Morality merely serves as one idealization that is "placed on ice". Both Daybreak, and Human, All-Too-Human trace the origin of morality to custom (D,9;HH,96), and both regard morality as a morality of altruism. But, Human, All-Too-Human can be described as a campaign against *metaphysics*, not morality. Consequently, while both works contain discussion of Nietzsche's views on morality, and attack the idea that transcendent rational truths can found morality, it is Daybreak that marks the beginning of his campaign against morality.

CHAPTER TWO:

NIETZSCHE'S LATER VIEWS ON MORALITY

There is no evidence to suggest that Nietzsche had ever abandoned the campaign specifically against morality begun in Daybreak. It would appear then that an examination of Nietzsche's later views on morality, those beginning with Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1885), reveal a position similar to the denial of morality expressed in Daybreak. In this chapter, I argue that there are two main features of Nietzsche's project which are revealed in his preface to On the Genealogy of Morals:

> under what conditions did man devise these value judgments good and evil? [where did they originate] *and what value do they themselves possess?* (GM,Pref.3)

In regard to his genealogical concerns, I argue that in Nietzsche's later writings he rejects his earlier view of the origin of morality as custom (D,9;HH,96). I claim that Nietzsche's new theory of the origin of morality, expressed in On the Genealogy of Morals, is his account of the origin of the good/evil mode of valuation in the "slave revolt" against the noble mode of valuation. Further, I maintain that the nobles' good/bad mode of valuation is a pre-moral phenomenon. However, since I claim that Nietzsche thinks that erroneous beliefs are responsible for the acceptance of the good/evil mode of valuation, I can account for his own view that his later writings continue to support the theory of Daybreak that the existence of moral judgments can be explicated in terms of error. More importantly, however, I maintain that in Nietzsche's later works, the *value* of morality becomes his primary concern despite the emergence of his new theory of the origin of morality, and his view that morality is based on error. I will show that in asking about the "value" of morality, Nietzsche has a specific conception of morality in mind; he is referring to the current morality, a morality of altruism, and that he perceives this morality as a "danger". Finally, I argue that his rejection of the good/evil mode of valuation places him outside the realm of morality, and as a result, his position could only be described as "immoralism" (an immoralist is one who accepts the framework of morality but chooses to act against it) by those who are, themselves, situated within a moral perspective.

In his early works, Nietzsche identified the *Sittlichkeit der Sitte* (the morality of mores) as the "origin of morality", and he explained its existence in terms of erroneous beliefs. It appears, however, that Nietzsche's conception of the origin of morality had changed by the time he wrote Beyond Good and Evil. He no longer seems to think that

the morality of mores is a "morality". Nietzsche claims:

> During the longest part of human history-- so-called prehistorical times-- the value or disvalue of an action was derived from its consequences. The action itself was considered as little as its origin. It was rather the way a distinction or disgrace still reaches back today from a child to its parents, in China: it was the retroactive force of success or failure that led men to think well or ill of an action. Let us call this period the *pre-moral* period of mankind: the imperative "know thyself" was as yet unknown. (BGE,32)

There is little doubt that the "morality of mores" belongs to what Nietzsche calls the "pre-moral" period (see D,18;GM,II,2). But, this classification usurps the position of Daybreak that the "morality of mores" represents the origin of morality. I argue that his new position is that the morality of mores was a pre-moral phenomenon, and hence, does not constitute a morality. However, prima facie, it appears that Nietzsche's conception of the *Sittlichkeit der Sitte* does not coincide with his description of the pre-moral era in §32 of Beyond Good and Evil. He states that during the pre-moral period "the value or disvalue of an action was derived from its *consequences*", but the "morality of mores" is not a consequentialist view. According to Daybreak, custom was regarded with reverence, and one obeyed the commands of the mores regardless of one's own interests. Primitive human beings acted morally when their actions were performed out of reverence for the mores. It was these two properties of the morality of mores that lead Nietzsche to believe that primitive humans had a morality. Thus, there is no initial indication that his early description of the mores entitles it to be placed within the pre-moral period. However, he avoids lapsing into contradiction by offering a new view of the morality of mores, one which coincides with his description of the pre-moral period. Nietzsche writes that "man was actually *made* calculable...with the aid of the morality of mores". This was made possible by training people to remember certain rules in a particular manner. He explains:

> "If something is to stay in the memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to *hurt* stays in the memory"-- this is a main clause of the oldest (unhappily also the most enduring) psychology on earth. (GM,II,3)

After recalling some of the cruel, old German punishments that served as memory devices-- stoning, breaking on the wheel, piercing with stakes, "quartering", boiling in oil or wine, smearing the wrongdoer with honey and leaving him in the sun for the flies-- Nietzsche claims:

> With the aid of such images and procedures one finally remembers five or six "I will not's," in regard to which one had given one's *promise* so as to participate in the advantages of society-- and it was indeed with the aid of this kind of memory that one at last came "to reason"! (GM,II,3)

His new conception of the morality of mores indicates that primitive human beings obeyed the mores out of fear of punishment (pain). Unlike the theory of Daybreak, Nietzsche now insists that the mores were obeyed from a desire to avoid the consequences associated with disobedience. As well, it becomes apparent that "erroneous beliefs" and reverence for the mores are no longer involved in his new "consequentialist" view of the morality of mores. This being the case, he has also abandoned his former

basis for considering the "morality of mores" as based on error. Nietzsche now rejects the idea that the mores served as a criterion for morality.

Nietzsche contrasts the "pre-moral" period with the current "moral" period of human history (BGE,32), or specifically, the *Sittlichkeit der Sitte* with a system of rules and valuations (i.e. "morality"). In doing so, we can expect to find a new theory of the origin of morality in his later writings. I claim that On the Genealogy of Morals contains Nietzsche's new account of the origin of morality. The subject of the first essay of the Genealogy is revealed in its title, "'Good and Evil,' 'Good and Bad'". Here, Nietzsche is discussing two distinct ways of judging the worth of persons, the noble mode of valuation, and the mode of valuation that is a product of "slave morality". His task is to explain the origin of the judgments of the worth of persons in order to account for judgments of morality and immorality.

In the first essay, Nietzsche investigates the origin of the concept and judgment "good", and explains that it originated from:

> 'the good' themselves, that is to say, the noble, powerful, high-stationed and high-minded, who felt and established themselves and their actions as good, that is, of the first rank, in contradiction to all the low, low minded, common, and plebeian. (GM,I,2)

He is claiming that originally our moral designation "good" belonged to human beings (i.e. the noble, see also BGE,260). According to Nietzsche, however, English psychologists have mistakenly thought that the judgment "good" originated with those to whom "goodness" was shown. Nietzsche's concern was to show that the word "good" did not originally denote "unegoistic" actions. In fact, he points out that "it was only when aristocratic value judgments declined that the whole antithesis 'egoistic' 'unegoistic' obtruded itself more and more on the human conscience" (GM,I,2). Nietzsche's point is that moral designations originally applied to human beings, not actions. As a result, he thinks that the egoistic/unegoistic antithesis was a rather late development, and resulted in the emergence of an entirely new way of thinking.

In labelling themselves "the good", the nobles are no more stating a fact about their political position than the jeweller is stating a fact about the cut, and appearance of a diamond in grading it to be a flawless, "d"-colored stone. Both are involved in the activity of ranking, grading, and evaluating-- distinguishing between superior and inferior specimens according to a particular standard of excellence. For Nietzsche, initially, the good designate themselves simply by their superiority in power (i.e. "the good" were "the powerful", "the masters"). Eventually, they use certain character traits to refer to themselves (eg. "the truthful", "the courageous", see GM,I,5). Nietzsche still thinks that only the politically superior are "the good", but they now have an increased understanding of that in which their good consists. But, with the decline of the nobility (i.e. the politically superior class), there still remains the noble characteristics of soul which are no longer associated with this political class. In other words, "truthful" and "courageous" function as ranking words which represent superiority of soul, independent of one's political position. And, "here too there evolves a 'good' and a 'bad' in a sense no longer referring to [political] station" (GM,I,6).

Nietzsche is claiming that the practice of judging the worth of persons has evolved

according to the standards upon which these value judgments are based. But, he has yet to explain the origin of this practice. An explanation of what originally caused the nobles to distinguish themselves as "the good", and what the ultimate source of the criteria used to differentiate "the good" from "the bad" is missing from his account. He does, however, indicate that the practice of evaluating persons and the criteria for doing so stem from the nobility's "triumphant affirmation of itself" (GM,I,10). Nietzsche contrasts this practice with the origin of slave morality which "says No to what is 'outside', what is 'different', what is 'not itself'" (GM,I,10).

> The reverse is the case with the noble mode of valuation:...it seeks its opposite only so as to affirm itself more gratefully and triumphantly-- its negative concept "low", "common", "bad", is only a subsequently-invented pale, contrasting image in relation to its positive basic concept-- filled with life and passion through and through-- "we noble ones, we good, beautiful, happy ones!" (GM,I,10).

According to Nietzsche, the slaves' mode of valuation rests on a comparison to others. However, the noble mode of valuation arises from a spontaneous self-affirmation. Nietzsche's point is that the nobles do not have to judge others as inferior in order to be content and appreciative of their own lives. But, they must regard others as inferior in order to perceive themselves as "the good" ("the superior"). In other words, the nobles' recognition of the differences between themselves and others is responsible for the judgment "good". Despite the necessity of comparison and the realization of differences, it is the nobles' prior self-affirmation which gives rise to the judgment "good". The noble mode of valuation "seeks its opposite only so as to affirm itself more gratefully and triumphantly" (GM,I,10). When the nobles judge themselves as "the good", they are expressing an affirmation of their own lives by comparing themselves to others. Nobles are "good" insofar as they possess the particular traits that belong to themselves and separate themselves from the common people. For instance, "truthfullness" belongs to "goodness" when the nobles begin to refer to themselves as "the truthful" as "distinct from the *lying* common man" (GM,I,5).

Nietzsche's view is that the practice of evaluating the worth of persons originated in the self-affirming nature of the noble class along with their recognition of the differences between themselves and the ruled group. Later, after the decline of the nobility, the same impulse of self-affirmation applies to the evaluation of "good" characteristics. Note, however, that Nietzsche has yet to explain the practice of judging the *moral* worth of persons. The nobles were not judging moral worth when they referred to themselves as "good", and the common people "bad". For instance, Nietzsche appealed to etymology to show that "*schlecht* [bad]...is identical with *schlicht* [plain, simple]...and originally designated the plain, the common man, as yet with no inculpatory implication and simply in contradistinction to the nobility" (GM,I,4). But, to claim that *schlecht* (bad) lacks any inculpatory connotations does not indicate a lack of evaluatory connotations. When the nobles judged the others as inferior because they lacked certain qualities, they were not regarding them as "immoral". Similarly, the nobles are not claiming to be the morally virtuous when they call themselves "the good". Nietzsche's presentation of the good/bad mode of valuation suggests that it must be distinguished from a moral evaluation. Hence, the terms "good" and "bad" do not

represent a moral distinction. If noble individuals are not expressing moral disapproval when they label someone "bad", then what are they feeling? Nietzsche writes:

> The noble feels contempt for the cowardly, the anxious, the petty, those intent on narrow utility; also for the suspicious with their unfree glances, those who humble themselves, the doglike people who allow themselves to be maltreated, the begging flatterers, above all the liars: it is part of the fundamental faith of all aristocrats that the common people lie. "We truthful ones"--thus the nobility of ancient Greece referred to itself. (BGE,260)

The nobility feels contempt towards liars because they lack the qualities that the nobility affirms in their own life, and this demonstrates the inferiority of the commoners. There seems to be no need to invoke moral concepts to describe the noble individual's sense of superiority.

According to Nietzsche, an event took place in ancient Rome that caused the downfall of the aristocratic mode of valuation. He refers to this event as the "slave revolt in morality" because the noble mode of valuation was inverted by the slaves through an act of revenge (GM,I,7). A "slave morality" originates from the base components of society, the oppressed, the abused, and those who are uncertain of themselves. Nietzsche claims that "the slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values" (GM,I,10). The slaves sought revenge by translating the virtues of the noble aristocrat into evils. Now, the herd determines the values of their culture, and these values are regarded as absolute. For the slave, "good" symbolizes all those qualities which assist in the alleviation of suffering, such as sympathy, pity, humility, and benevolence. The concepts of "good" and "bad" were transvalued when the morality of the herd prevailed. The good/bad mode of valuation was replaced with the contrast between what was good and evil (böse). Indubitably, the "good/evil" mode of valuation of "slave morality" is a moral mode of valuation in the sense that it invokes the idea of human responsibility in order to judge the worth of persons. It appears then that Nietzsche's account of the "good/evil" mode of valuation (the "slave revolt in morality") is his view of the origin of moral valuation.

In claiming that ressentiment was the contributing factor of the revaluation of noble values, Nietzsche thinks that it creates a new system of values based on "good" and "evil", and in doing so "evil" now becomes synonymous with "inferior". He discusses the impact of ressentiment:

> In my Genealogy of Morals I offered the first psychological analysis of the counter-concepts of a *noble* morality and a morality of *ressentiment*-- the latter born of the No to the former: but this is the Judaeo-Christian morality pure and simple. So that it could say No to everything on earth that represents the ascending tendency of life, to that which has turned out well, to power, to beauty, to self-affirmation, the instinct of *ressentiment*, which had here become genius, had to invent another world from whose point of view this affirmation of life appeared as evil, as the reprehensible as such. (A,24)

Nietzsche maintains that, unlike the noble mode of valuation, Judaeo-Christian morality is not simply expressing a preference for their conception of the "good" life. Instead, he sees this morality as a deliberate attempt to devalue and denigrate the qualities that the

nobles regard as "good". And, that is why Nietzsche describes slave morality as saying "No to what is 'outside,' what is 'different,' what is 'not itself'; and *this* No is its creative deed" (GM,I,10). This is the manner in which the slaves' ressentiment gives birth to new values. It is also worth noting that the nobles' affirmation of their own lives is expressed without any commitment to metaphysical beliefs. However, the above passage indicates that in order to regard the nobles' values as inferior, the slaves had to appeal to a "higher authority". Consequently, the individual filled with ressentiment does not simply come to the conclusion that it is better to be poor, meek, and powerless. Instead, the individual must be convinced by a "higher authority" (eg. God) that the noble traits are "evil". As a result, the only way that the noble qualities could be devalued is by regarding them as "evil", and this is done from a moral point of view. It appears then that the noble (good/bad) mode of valuation offers a naturalistic viewpoint whereas the slaves' mode of valuation involves a moral point of view. Nietzsche's point is that the revaluation of values was made possible by the replacement of noble (non-moral) values with a moral mode of valuation.

Another major feature of the moral mode of valuation that is absent from the noble mode is the idea of responsibility. Nietzsche points out that the nobles' "bad" has no inculpatory connotation (see GM,I,4) in the sense that the bad man is not responsible for being bad. On the other hand, the moral viewpoint insists on holding the individual responsible for being "evil". His position seems to be that the revaluation of values was accomplished by holding individuals responsible for their actions. Nietzsche explains:

> Wherever responsibilities are sought, it is usually the instinct of wanting to judge and punish which is at work. Becoming has been deprived of its innocence when any being-such-and-such is traced back to will, to purposes, to acts of responsibility: the doctrine of the will has been invented essentially for the purpose of punishment, that is, because one wanted to impute guilt. The entire old psychology, the psychology of the will, was conditioned by the fact that its originators, the priests at the head of ancient communities, wanted to create for themselves the right to punish-- or wanted to create this right for God. Men were considered "free" so that they might be judged and punished-- so that they might become *guilty*... (TI,VI,7)

According to Nietzsche, the idea of responsibility is associated with rewards and punishments which assists in making the revaluation possible. Enticed by the promise of an eternal reward, the resentful look upon their suffering as a test from god, and believe that one day they will be recompensed.

The claim that responsibility is the distinguishing feature of a moral mode of valuation gains further support from §32 of Beyond Good and Evil where Nietzsche contrasts the pre-moral period with the moral period. He describes the transition from the pre-moral to the moral period as a complete "reversal of perspective". Nietzsche explains that in the last ten thousand years, the consequences of an action no longer determine its value. Instead, it is now agreed that the origin (the intention) of an action decides its value. In this respect, he points out that the moral period involved the first attempt at self-knowledge. But, to think that the value of an action lies strictly in the value of the intention means that one had to recognize that the intention is "the whole

origin and pre-history of an action". And, Nietzsche adds that "almost to the present day this prejudice dominated moral praise, blame, judgment, and philosophy on earth" (BGE,32). It is necessary for morality to identify the intention behind an act as the whole origin of the act because the "entire theory of responsibility depends upon the naive psychology that the only cause [of an action] is will" (WP,288). The idea of responsibility entails the doctrine of free will. Similarly, from the same note, he adds that "the value of man is posited as a *moral* value," then "there must a principle in man, a 'free will' as *causa prima*" (WP,288). Nietzsche is claiming that the moral viewpoint assumes that one cannot evaluate the worth of persons without the notion of responsibility, or as he explains, an "irresponsible" individual would have "no business before the moral tribunal" (WP,288). He is arguing that the moral mode of valuation originates when noble values are revaluated by means of the slaves' ressentiment, and that the idea of responsibility helps to bring about the revaluation through its association with eternal rewards and punishments (i.e. a transcendent "beyond").

In the second essay of the Genealogy, Nietzsche questions how the consciousness of guilt, the "bad conscience" came into being. He points out that the etymological connection between the moral concept *Schuld* [guilt] and *Schulden* [debts] implies that punishment was originally viewed as requital. According to Nietzsche, primitive human beings viewed punishment as a form of compensation based on the idea that "every injury has its *equivalent* and can actually be paid back, even if only through the *pain* of the culprit" (GM,II,4). In this respect, punishment stemmed from the contractual relationship between "debtor" and "creditor". Nietzsche adds that it was not until recently that the concept of freedom of the will was a factor in determining punishment. The current view which holds individuals responsible for their actions was foreign to primitive human beings.

Nietzsche explains that in a contractual relationship a promise is made on the part of the debtor in order to instill trust between the two parties. He writes:

> the debtor made a contract with the creditor and pledged that if he should fail to repay he would substitute something that he "possessed," something he had control over; for example, his body, his wife, his freedom, or even his life. (GM,II,5)

This form of compensation has the creditor receiving a recompense in the form of some pleasure (i.e. the pleasure of being permitted to exercise his power over the powerless). An individual who fails to meet the terms of the agreement is not considered "immoral", although the creditor must be compensated. Note, however, that it should not be construed as a form of punishment to owe the creditor some form of compensation. Nietzsche thinks that the criminal was not punished "*because* one held the wrongdoer responsible for his deed, thus...on the presupposition that only the guilty one should be punished" (GM,II,4). The criminal was still judged to be the cause of some harm, but there is no reason to equate this with "moral guilt". Nietzsche's point is that it is in this non-moral "world of exchange" where the concepts "guilt", "conscience", and "duty" originated.

Eventually, a process of "moralization" (GM,II,21) occurred where these non-moral concepts, "debt" and "obligation" became moral concepts. But, originally,

judgments of "debt" had nothing to do with judgments of "moral guilt". "Guilt" only becomes a moral concept when it is used for a so-called "moral purpose", the purpose of self-denial. Nietzsche maintains that the "moralization" of the concepts "guilt" and "duty" occurs when they "are pushed back into the conscience; more precisely, the involvement of the *bad* conscience with the concept of god" (GM,II,21). This indicates that "debt" is moralized into "guilt" when the idea is directed at the self, when it is applied to the "bad conscience". As well, the concept of god is used within this process of moralization. Nietzsche explains that "this man of the bad conscience has seized upon the presupposition of religion so as to drive his self-torture to its most gruesome pitch of severity and rigor" (GM,II,22). Now, the repayment of a debt is owed to god, and the punishment is directed against oneself since it could not be discharged outwardly.

> Guilt before God: this thought becomes an instrument of torture to him. He apprehends in "God" the ultimate antithesis of his own ineluctable animal instincts; he reinterprets these animal instincts themselves as a form of guilt before God (as hostility, rebellion, insurrection against the "Lord", the "father", the primal ancestor and origin of the world); he stretches himself upon the contradiction "God" and "Devil"; he ejects from himself all his denial of himself, of his nature, naturalness, and actuality, in the form of an affirmation, as something existent, corporeal, real, as God, as the holiness of God, as God the Judge, as God the Hangman, as the beyond, as eternity, as torment without end, as hell, as the immeasurability of punishment and guilt.
>
> In this psychical cruelty there resides a madness of the will which is absolutely unexampled: the *will* of man to find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for; his *will* to think himself punished without any possibility of the punishment becoming equal to the guilt; his *will* to infect and poison the fundamental ground of things with the problem of punishment and guilt so as to cut off once and for all his own exit from this labyrinth of "fixed ideas"; his *will* to erect an ideal-- that of the "holy God"-- and in the face of it to feel the palpable certainty of his own absolute unworthiness. (GM,II,22)

This individual feels an indebtedness to god, as "guilt", and believes that she owes god her own pain and suffering.

One of the consequences of this process of "moralization" is that judgments of the individual's worth are involved with the moral idea of "guilt". Nietzsche thinks that the pain and suffering that the individual owes to god is owed because she is deemed "evil" from a moral point of view. Conversely, a judgment of debt has nothing to do with the individual's worth. The difference between "moral guilt" and the non-moral idea of indebtedness to the community is that "guilt" is based on one's worth as a person, and owing a "debt" is just based on the recognition that one has caused some harm. Nietzsche's point is that the belief in "responsibility" played a major role in the moralization of "debt" into "guilt", and in the revaluation. The aim of the revaluation was to devalue the noble type of person, but nonetheless to accept this person as inferior. As a result, the noble must be viewed as deserving of the punishment based on her worth as a person, and this also requires the belief that she is responsible for what she is. This idea of responsibility is reminiscent of "moral responsibility".

Nietzsche claims that moral evaluation originates when something already in existence is "reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it..." (GM,II,12). In the first essay, he described the revaluation of the nobles' values, and how their practice of judging value became reinterpreted to new ends (i.e. the ends of ressentiment). Ressentiment gave birth to new values, a slave morality. In the second essay, the non-moral concept of "guilt" (as the repayment of a debt) was transformed through a process of "moralization" whereby the concepts of "guilt" and "debt" were pushed back into the bad conscience.

In the third essay, Nietzsche presents the "ascetic priest" as the representative, and key source of the ideas that made the revaluation possible. The "ascetic priest" preaches the ideals of an ascetic life; self-denial, poverty, chastity, and humility (GM,III,8). It is important to point out, however, that Nietzsche draws a distinction between this "ascetic ideal" (religious asceticism), and the "cheerful asceticism" of the philosopher (philosophical asceticism). Unlike religious asceticism, the ascetic lifestyle of the philosopher does not involve a hatred of the senses, just as there is no "virtue" involved in the "chastity" of an athlete who abstains from women before a competition (GM,III,8). When these individuals deny themselves one thing for the sake of another, it is not because they consider the activity "bad in itself", but because it would represent an interference to the attainment of something deemed more important to them. Here, the individual is simply striving for "an optimum of favorable conditions under which it can expend all its strength and achieve its maximal feeling of power" (GM,III,7). Nietzsche only objects to the moral asceticism represented by the ascetic priest. The priest does not represent asceticism as simply a means for achieving something else in life. According to Nietzsche, what is at stake according to the priest's ideal is the,

> *valuation* the ascetic priest places on our life: he juxtaposes it (along with what pertains to it: "nature," "world," the whole sphere of becoming and transitoriness) with a quite different mode of existence which it opposes and excludes, *unless* it turn against itself, *deny itself*: in that case, the case of the ascetic life, life counts as a bridge to that other mode of existence. The ascetic treats life as a wrong road on which one must finally walk back to the point where it begins, or as a mistake that is put right by deeds-- that we *ought* to put right: for he *demands* that one go along with him: where he can he compels acceptance of *his* evaluation of existence. (GM,III,11)

In contrast to philosophical asceticism, the ascetic priest holds that asceticism is good because certain things in life are inherently bad. Unlike the philosopher's "ascetic ideal", Nietzsche views the priest's ideal as a moral ideal since it represents certain forms of self-denial (eg. chastity, poverty) as good-in-themselves.

Nietzsche asks an important question in the title of the third essay of the Genealogy: "What is the Meaning of Ascetic Ideals?" He explains that human beings had no meaning in their lives prior to the ascetic ideal.

> *This* is precisely what the ascetic ideal means: that something was *lacking*, that man was surrounded by a fearful *void*-- he did not know how to justify, to account for, to affirm himself; he *suffered* from the problem of his meaning. He also suffered otherwise, he was in the main a sickly animal: but his problem was

> *not* suffering itself, but that there was no answer to the crying question, "*why* do I suffer?"
>
> Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* repudiate suffering as such; he *desires* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a *purpose* of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far-- *and the ascetic ideal offered man meaning!* It was the only meaning offered so far; any meaning is better than none at all; the ascetic ideal was in every sense the *"faute de mieux" par excellence* so far. In it, suffering was *interpreted*...it placed all suffering under the perspective of *guilt*. (GM,III,28)

Nietzsche thinks that the ascetic ideal was accepted due to the meaning it offered to human beings, "the only meaning". His position seems to be that the ascetic ideal offered an interpretation of suffering insofar as it viewed suffering as guilt. For Nietzsche, however, this account of suffering as guilt explains why the priest's ideal has been accepted. In addition, this interpretation of suffering must assist in the explanation of how the revaluation was achieved (i.e. how moral evaluation originated). In providing an explanation of the effectiveness of the ascetic ideal, Nietzsche is attempting to explain the power of moral evaluation, the success of the revaluation.

What does Nietzsche mean when he claims that suffering was "placed under the perspective of guilt"? He explains:

> every sufferer instinctively seeks a cause for his suffering; more exactly, an agent; still more specifically a *guilty* agent who is susceptible to suffering-- in short, some living thing upon which he can, on some pretext or other, vent his affects, actually or in effigy: for the venting of his affects represents the greatest attempt on the part of the suffering to win relief, *anaesthesia*-- the narcotic he cannot help desiring to deaden pain of any kind. This alone, I surmise, constitutes the actual physiological cause of *ressentiment*, vengefulness, and the like: a desire to *deaden pain by means of affects*..."Someone or other must be to blame for my feeling ill"-- this kind of reasoning is common to all the sick, and is indeed held the more firmly the more the real cause of their feeling, the physiological cause, remains hidden. (GM,II,15)

Nietzsche is addressing this passage to the "sick", to those suffering from ressentiment towards the healthy. These wretched individuals are the ones that require the services of the ascetic priest because they are unable to affirm their own lives. These sufferers need to know who is responsible for their suffering, so they seek the guilty agent. The ascetic priest teaches that it is the sufferer, herself, who is the cause of her own suffering.

> "Quite so, my sheep! someone must be to blame for it: but you yourself are this someone, you alone are to blame for it-- *you alone are to blame for yourself!*" (GM,III,15)

But, why would the sufferer believe that she is the cause of her own suffering? For Nietzsche, the ascetic priest maintains that she must search for the cause of her suffering in something that she has done--i.e. in some guilt that is to be understood as a punishment (GM,III,20). The ascetic priest accounts for suffering in terms of a punishment for something that the sufferer has done. He wants to direct ressentiment

back to the individual, and employs the concepts of "guilt", "sin", and "damnation" for this purpose. "Sin" is the priestly name for bad conscience, and serves as an example of the exploitation of the sense of guilt. Nietzsche writes:

> All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*-- this is what I call the internalization of man: thus it was that man first developed what was later called his "soul"...Those fearful bulwarks with which the political organization protected itself against the old instincts of freedom-- punishments belong among these bulwarks-- brought about that all those instincts of wild, free, prowling man turned backward *against man himself*. Hostility, cruelty, joy in persecuting, in attacking, in change, in destruction-- all this turned against the possessors of such instincts: *that* is the origin of the "bad conscience".
>
> The man who, from lack of external enemies and resistances and forcibly confined to the oppressive narrowness and punctiliousness of custom, impatiently lacerated, persecuted, gnawed at, assaulted, and maltreated himself...this fool, this yearning and desperate prisoner became the inventor of the "bad conscience". (GM,II,16)

Nietzsche is explaining where the self-denying ideals originate. Through these ideals the individual is able to vent her aggressive impulses against herself once she is denied by the "bulwarks..of the political organization" from venting them on others.

The three essays of Nietzsche's Genealogy are inter-related. In the second and third essays he offers an explanation of the revaluation of values postulated in the first essay. Ultimately, Nietzsche is arguing that the revaluation, motivated by ressentiment, was accomplished by means of the acceptance of the priest's ascetic ideal, and by means of the idea of "guilt" (or moral responsibility) that the ideal was accepted. It seems to me that Nietzsche devotes an entire work to the explanation of the revaluation of values because he identifies moral evaluation with the mode of valuation that replaced the nobles' values. And, this explanation helps to justify the title of the work-- On the Genealogy of Morals since the idea of "guilt" and the ascetic ideal are to be found at the origin of moral evaluation. The theory of the Genealogy thus seems to accomplish what was Nietzsche's aim in Daybreak even though it presents a new account of the origin of morality. It is an attempt to use his concept of morality to provide insights into its origin and history, and to utilize an historical hypotheses for greater clarity.

Despite the differences between Nietzsche's account of the origin of morality in Daybreak, and his later theory presented in the Genealogy, his interpretation of the "denial of morality" (i.e. the claim that morality is based on error) appears to be consistent throughout his early and later works. He explains the origin of morality in terms of erroneous presuppositions. In Daybreak, Nietzsche claimed that morality is based on error, and described how beliefs in "imaginary causalities" (eg. the appeal to the supernatural to account for the bad luck following disobedience to the mores) explained the origin of moral judgments. In this case, these false beliefs preserved the "authority for the mores" as well as creating "reverence for the mores". For Nietzsche, moral actions were performed out of "reverence", but it was the belief in "imaginary causalities" that gave rise to this feeling of reverence. The Genealogy continues to support the view that a belief in "imaginary causalities" (eg. the belief in a supernatural

involvement between suffering and disobedience) is responsible for the existence of moral evaluation. The revaluation of the non-moral noble values to a moral mode of valuation was accomplished by means of a belief in a "higher authority" for determining the worth of persons, and the acceptance of the notion of responsibility. Thus, Nietzsche is claiming that the moral mode of valuation presupposes the existence of a metaphysical realm. The similarity between his early and later views is reinforced in this passage:

> My demand upon the philosopher is known, that he take his stand *beyond* good and evil and leave the illusion of moral judgment *beneath* himself. This follows from an insight which I was the first to formulate: *that there are altogether no moral facts*. Moral judgments agree with religious ones in believing in realities which are no realities. Morality is merely an interpretation of certain phenomena-- more precisely, a misinterpretation. Moral judgments, like religious ones, belong to a stage of ignorance at which the very concept of the real and the distinction between what is real and imaginary are still lacking; thus "truth" at this stage designates all sorts of things which we today call "imaginings". (TI,VII,1)

In what sense is Nietzsche claiming that morality is a misinterpretation of certain phenomena? He had already revealed its meaning in the preceding section when he wrote:

> *The whole realm of religion and morality belongs under this concept of imaginary causes*. The "explanation" of disagreeable general feelings. They are produced by beings that are hostile to us (evil spirits: the most famous cases-- the misunderstanding of the hysterical as witches). They are produced by acts which cannot be approved (the feeling of "sin", of "sinfulness", is slipped under a physiological discomfort; one always finds reasons for being dissatisfied with oneself). They are produced as punishments, as payment for something we should not have done, for what we should not have *been* (impudently generalized by Schopenhauer into a principle in which morality appears as what it really is-- as the very poisoner and slanderer of life: "Every great pain, whether physical or spiritual, declares what we deserve; for it could not come if we did not deserve it"...) They are produced as effects of ill-considered actions that turned out badly. (Here the affects, the senses, are posited as causes, as "guilty"; and physiological calamities are interpreted with the help of other calamities as "deserved".) (TI,VI,6)

In this passage he explains suffering in terms of "imaginary causes" in the same way that he referred to morality as a "misinterpretation", that moral judgments belong to a stage at which "'truth' designates all sorts of things which we today call 'imaginings'" (TI,VII,1). Morality is a "misinterpretation" in the sense that it is based on error, the notion that there is a transcendent source of values. And, Nietzsche's discussion of "misinterpretations" is intended to provide him with a basis for the claim that "there are altogether no moral facts", and thus for his demand that the philosopher "take his stand *beyond* good and evil and leave the illusion of moral judgment beneath himself".

Nietzsche's position is not completely identical throughout his writings. In Daybreak, he views erroneous beliefs as "natural" errors insofar as there is an attempt

to understand suffering, but with a limited degree of intelligence. As well, these primitive human beings did not have a science. His later view is that erroneous beliefs were invented for specific purposes (eg. the false beliefs which resulted in the revaluation). But, Nietzsche seems to think that the major purpose which lies behind such beliefs is priestly power. These erroneous beliefs assisted the priest in bringing about the revaluation of the nobles' values, and allowed the priest to occupy a position of power over the suffering as a "savior". Nietzsche clarifies his position:

> The beginning of the Bible contains the *whole* psychology of the priest. The priest knows only one danger: that is science, the sound conception of cause and effect...The concept of guilt and punishment, the whole of the "moral world order", was invented against science, against the emancipation of man from the priest...The concept of guilt and punishment, including the doctrine of "grace", of "redemption", of "forgiveness"-- lies through and through, and without any psychological reality-- were invented to destroy man's *causal* sense: they were an attempt to assassinate cause and effect...When the natural consequences of a deed are no longer "natural", but thought of as caused by the conceptual specters of superstition, by "God", by "spirits", by "souls", as if they were merely "moral" consequences, as reward, punishment, hint, means of education, then the presupposition of knowledge has been destroyed-- *then the greatest crime against humanity has been committed*. Sin, to repeat it once more, this form of man's self-violation *par excellence*, was invented to make science, culture, every elevation and nobility of man impossible; the priest rules through the invention of sin. (A,49)

He no longer thinks that the errors associated with morality extend back to the beginning of civilization. Nietzsche is now claiming that the errors invented by the priest occurred at a later date. Further, the priest invented the beliefs which gave rise to the revaluation, and in doing so, he can be regarded as the creator of moral valuation. Nietzsche often assumes a close connection between religion and morality, and this explains why he thinks that moral valuation depends on the acceptance of some basically religious beliefs.

It appears that Nietzsche is identifying all morality with religious morality. But, if Nietzsche's account of the good/evil mode of valuation is his view of the origin of morality, then why does he sometimes refer to the earlier noble mode of valuation as "noble morality" (GM,I,10;A,24), or "master morality" (BGE,260)? This does not pose too great a problem, since Nietzsche is not arguing that there is an essence of morality. Why, then, would Nietzsche occasionally use the word "morality" to describe the (non-moral) noble mode of valuation? Perhaps, it is reasonable to assume that Nietzsche, who made a habit of creating "catchy" phrases (eg."beyond good and evil", "the will to power", "the herd"), described aristocratic values as "master morality" in contrast to "slave morality" because it provided another clever coinage to distinguish two distinct modes of valuation. After all, he only uses the phrase "master morality" (*Herren-Moral*) once in his writings (BGE,260). In the case of "noble morality", this phrase is less awkward to use than the "noble mode of valuation". These occasional usages of "noble morality" are offset by the arguments that I have provided for regarding good/bad as a non-moral distinction.

Nietzsche may be correct about the origin of judgments of moral worth, but this does not mean that individuals still believe in the same "imaginary causalities" as did the people of the past. In fact, today the world is host to a large population of people who do not believe in god, eternal rewards and punishment, or in any other supernatural intrusion, but who still make moral judgments. This suggests that Nietzsche's view of the origin of moral judgments does not provide him with a basis for opposing all judgments of moral worth. How would he respond then to the fact that there are people (eg. atheists) making moral judgments without believing in "imaginary causalities"? Nietzsche points out that "we still draw the conclusions of judgments we consider false, of teachings in which we no longer believe-- our feelings make us do it" (D,99). And, he specifically relates this to the passage discussing the denial of morality where he writes that we must "*learn to think differently*- in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: *to feel differently*" (D,103). Ultimately, moral judgments owe their existence to false beliefs, but Nietzsche claims that we can continue to make moral judgments even after rejecting these beliefs due to the emotional impact they have on us. As a result, the person who is approved from the moral point of view is one who represents the ideal of the society, and is worthy of respect and esteem. Others too consider it preferable to be esteemed whether or not they accept the beliefs that established the superiority of the "moral" person in the first place. Nietzsche's position is that erroneous beliefs are presuppositions of all judgments of moral worth in the sense that they make possible the acceptance of the moral point of view for judging the worth of persons directly, or via the accepted ideal.

So far I have shown that Nietzsche's later account of the origin of morality from On the Genealogy of Morals was intended to replace the inadequate theory of Daybreak, and that the origin of the good/evil mode of valuation in the "slave revolt" against the noble mode of valuation is his later view of the origin of moral valuation. However, Nietzsche realizes that his genealogical approach to morality merely constitutes one of the three ways that he thinks morality can be studied. He claims that one can provide:

1) A *critique* of moral valuations.
2) A *history of the origins* of moral valuations.
3) A history of ethical systems. (GS,345)

According to Nietzsche, a critique of morality involves much more than a criticism of "the foolish opinions of a people about their morality...-opinions about its origin, religious sanction, the superstition of free will, and things of that sort" (GS,345). In other words, it is not enough to offer a criticism of the opinions of "thou shalt" commands, but instead a critique of the *value* of a command "thou shalt" is needed. Nietzsche writes, "just as certainly as the value of a medication for a sick person is completely independent of whether he thinks about medicine scientifically or the way old women do" (GS,345). In the second approach, he points out that some thinkers have attempted to present a history of the origins of moral valuations (Nietzsche is clearly referring to Paul Rée, author of Der Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen), but he also explains that this is something quite different from a critique. For Nietzsche, an examination of the history of our moral valuations is important, but would represent an incomplete study of moral matters. His loftier ambition was to provide an historical

approach to morality while also questioning the *value* of morality. Finally, he suggests that one may offer a history of ethical systems, but does not offer any other comment on this approach. It seems to me that this approach would involve an examination of various moral views expressed throughout the history of philosophy (eg. Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Mill, Kant). In any event, this approach seems to be merely descriptive, and fails to address Nietzsche's fundamental concern with the value of morality.

That the origin of morality was not Nietzsche's sole concern in regard to his "campaign" is evident throughout his writings. He explains that an early preoccupation with "the question of where our good and evil really *originated*", soon developed into a much larger concern:

> under what conditions did man devise these value judgments good and evil? [where did they originate?] *and what value do they themselves possess?* (GM,Pref.3)

Nietzsche's account of the good/evil mode of valuation replacing aristocratic values explains where value judgments originated, but the question concerning the *value* of moral values remains unanswered. Nietzsche has provided us with a knowledge of the history of morality which lays the groundwork for his new demand:

> we need a *critique* of moral values, *the value of these values themselves must first be called in question*. (GM,Pref.6)

In asking about the value of morality, Nietzsche is trying to come to terms with whether these values have "hitherto hindered or furthered human prosperity", or whether they are symptomatic of a life of "distress" or "impoverishment" (GM,Pref.3). The basic distinction here is that between two states of being: the "overfullness of life" and the "impoverishment of life". Kaufmann adds, "what is here suggested is that the value of morality depends on its relation to health, or life, or ultimately power".[11] In inquiring about the value of morality, Nietzsche has a specific conception of morality in mind; he is referring to the current morality, a morality of altruism which can be described as "the residuum of Christian states of mind" (D,132). It is important to note that Nietzsche is still committed to the view that morality is based on error, but points out that "even if a morality has grown out of an error, the realization of this fact would not as much as touch the problem of its value" (GS,345).

According to Nietzsche, life demands that we posit values of some sort (BGE,9). But, he wants us to pay strict attention to the kind of life that is the result of particular value judgments. Nietzsche's position is that Christian morality represents "a revolt against life" (TI,V,5). He writes:

> life itself values through us when we posit values. From this it follows that even that anti-natural morality which conceives of God as the counter-concept and condemnation of life is only a value judgment of life-- but of what life? of what kind of life? I have already given the answer: of declining, weakened, weary, condemned life. (TI,V,5)

Nietzsche thinks that the values posited by Christian morality involve a negation of life and cater to those who possess an instinct of decadence. He seems to assess the value of a morality according to its treatment of the instincts. An anti-natural morality has turned *against* the instincts of life; it has declared war on passion itself. For Nietzsche,

Christianity is an example of an anti-natural morality *par excellence*. He cites a passage in the New Testament from the Sermon on the Mount to show the treatment given to the passions (in this case, sexuality): "If thy eye offend thee, pluck it out" (Matt.5:29). Nietzsche's point is that advocating the destruction of the passions as a preventive measure is not a solution, just like "we no longer admire dentists who 'pluck out' teeth so that they will not hurt anymore" (TI,V,1). He thinks that those who attack the passions are those who are too weak (undisciplined) to impose moderation on themselves. The weak cannot find in themselves the strength to affirm life, and the suffering which is part of life. Instead, they require an anaesthetic to deaden the pain (suffering). And, Christianity provides relief by offering pity, and promises of an eternal reward for those who live according to the dictates of the faith. It is evident that Nietzsche is not suggesting that the passions be given free reign. Instead, his criticism is that the church never asks: "How can one spiritualize, beautify, deify a craving" (TI,V,1)? Some of the objections that he raises against anti-natural morality focus on the character of its adherents. In the intentions that underlie it, anti-natural morality assumes the value of life. But these intentions are displayed in ideas that imply that life is some sort of mistake. If these ideas are to be taken seriously, then one must hide one's deepest intentions from oneself. In this case, the individual's revolt against life is based on self-deception. It seems that Nietzsche often resorts to *ad hominem* attacks on his opponents. However, *ad hominem* attacks are not necessarily fallacious. As will become evident in the third chapter, Nietzsche thinks that the evaluation of people and lives depends on character. For Nietzsche, to assess a value judgment is, to a large extent, to assess the value of the way of life of which it is a part. His many personal remarks about specific people cannot be separated from his philosophy. They are part of the argument.

What is the connection between Nietzsche's opposition to anti-natural morality, and his desire to go *beyond* good and evil? He writes: "My demand upon the philosopher is known, that he take his stand *beyond* good and evil and leave the illusion of moral judgment *beneath* himself. This demand follows from an insight which I was the first to formulate: that *there are altogether no moral facts*" (TI,VII,1). Nietzsche is claiming that moral judgment is a fiction, and concludes that there are no moral facts. If Nietzsche is correct and there are no moral facts, then nothing can be good or evil. He explains: "Morality is merely an interpretation of certain phenomena-- more precisely, a misinterpretation" (TI,VII,1). Nietzsche is arguing that morality belongs to "a stage of ignorance", and what is referred to as "truth" at this stage merely designates the "imaginary". Consequently, he thinks that judgments of good and evil are the result of erroneous beliefs. This means that Nietzsche is also negating the moral point of view which relies upon the dualism of good and evil to warrant all its judgments of moral worth. So when he demands that the philosopher "take his stand *beyond* good and evil and leave the illusion of moral judgment *beneath* himself", he is asking him to transcend the dualistic moral perspective. And, in doing so, one is also abandoning the features associated with the moral point of view (i.e. ressentiment, and responsibility). As well, it is crucial to note that the person who transcends this dualism is only an immoralist in the eyes of one who is still trapped in the dualistic moral perspective. It seems to me then that Nietzsche (who stands *outside* this perspective, see GS,380) refers to himself

as an "immoralist" for the benefit of his readers (i.e. for those who accept the dualistic moral viewpoint). Why else would he call himself an "immoralist"? It wouldn't make sense for Nietzsche to refer to himself as an "immoralist" if he was only in the company of those who have gone "beyond good and evil". So, Nietzsche labels himself an "immoralist" for the sake of his readers who are situated within a dualistic moral perspective.

To stand "beyond good and evil" involves more than simply abandoning morality. However, a "point beyond *our* good and evil" does include "a freedom from everything 'European', by which I mean the sum of the imperious value judgments that have become part of our flesh and blood...The human being of such a beyond who wants to behold the supreme measures of value of his time must first of all 'overcome' this time in himself...and also his prior aversion and contradiction *against* this time" (GS,345). For Nietzsche, going beyond good and evil entails a liberation from morality, but this *jenseits* involves a liberation from morality by "overcoming" the prejudices of one's time, and this means understanding what the prejudices are. Nehamas explains that "to be beyond good and evil is to see how good and evil qualities have been thought to be related so far, to realize how, according to Nietzsche, they are related in fact, and to reconsider that relationship and all that it implies".[12] How does Nietzsche characterize the relation between good and evil? He thinks that good and evil qualities are not opposites, but instead are related to one another: "It might even be possible that what constitutes the value of these good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to, and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite things-- maybe even one with them in essence. Maybe!" (BGE,2). And, in Thus Spoke Zarathustra he makes a similar point, "Once you suffered your passions and called them evil. But now you have only your virtues left: they grew out of your passions" (Z,I,5). According to Nietzsche, moral and immoral qualities do not stand in opposition to one another. The fact that they were perceived as opposites is the result of an interpretation, more precisely, a misinterpretation. Nietzsche's purpose, however, was "to demonstrate the absolute homogeneity of all events and the application of moral distinctions as conditioned by perspective; to demonstrate how everything praised as moral is identical in essence with everything immoral" (WP,272). So, situating oneself "beyond good and evil" also includes denying that the distinction between good and evil can even be made. Ultimately, Nietzsche was able to transcend both morality, and immorality. This allowed him to move "beyond good and evil" and suggest ideas for the development of a life-affirming mode of valuation, in contrast to the life-negating good/evil mode of valuation in which the value of temporal life, the passions, the body, and the instincts is depreciated.

CHAPTER THREE:

NIETZSCHE'S POSITIVE VIEWS

In the first two chapters I have focused exclusively on Nietzsche's deconstruction of morality. It would be a mistake, however, to think that Nietzsche regards his critique of morality as purely negative. In this chapter, I argue that Nietzsche's positive views are presented as a reaction to the nihilism resulting from his rejection of morality and metaphysics. However, it is important to note that nihilism is not to be understood as just a theoretical stance, but as the contemporary way of being. Human beings have rejected morality and metaphysics in their lives. Further, I claim that an interpretation of Nietzsche's positive views requires an understanding of his approach to philosophy. Specifically, these views must be understood as a reaction against metaphysical philosophy and its appeal to universal "truth". Moreover, I insist that Nietzsche's rejection of any theoretically founded eternal transcendent perspective means that we are unable to discuss his positive views separate from how he situates his thinking historically. Thus, I argue that Nietzsche's presentation of the eternal recurrence (the idea that whatever happens, has happened an infinite number of times in the past, and will continue to happen infinitely, *precisely* in the same way as it is happening now) serves as an existential imperative insofar as it is the "heaviest of burdens" that one takes upon oneself, and in taking it upon oneself as an existential choice, one transcends nihilism toward the Übermensch. Thus, the eternal recurrence is not a cosmological doctrine that one must accept as true on independent rational grounds. Instead, claims *about* truth are revealed in life (situated action), and are ontologically prior to discourse about objective "truth". For Nietzsche, the meaning of life is to be found in purely human terms. Consequently, I maintain that Nietzsche's affirmative thinking pertains to our level of being, hence avoiding the question of truth "in itself". Finally, I claim that despite Nietzsche's references to himself as an "immoralist", the English term "amoralism" better conveys to a contemporary English speaking readership the meaning of Nietzsche's project than does the term "immoralism". However, I do not think that either term is able to capture the meaning of Nietzsche's *jenseits*.

In examining Nietzsche's views on morality, many writers confine their discussion to his attack on morality, and deny that we should take seriously his *positive* views.[13] However, I claim that Nietzsche's project involves much more than a deconstruction of morality and metaphysics. It seems to me that Nietzsche was also an affirmative thinker, and that an understanding of his positive views requires an examination of his approach to philosophy including his views on truth. Nietzsche calls for the introduction of an *historical* approach into philosophy to replace metaphysical philosophy. He writes:

Historical philosophy, on the other hand, which can no longer be separated from

> natural science, the youngest of all philosophical methods, has discovered in individual cases (and this will probably be the result in every case) that there are no opposites, except in the customary exaggeration of popular or metaphysical interpretations, and that a mistake in reasoning lies at the bottom of this antithesis. (HH,1)

For Nietzsche, historical philosophizing examines things in the light of their coming to be, and traces transformations throughout their existence. For instance, it asks such questions as:

> How can something originate in its opposite, for example rationality in irrationality, the sentient in the dead, logic in unlogic, disinterested contemplation in covetous desire, living for others in egoism, truth in error? (HH,1)

These questions are prompted by the experience of change, process, or transformation. That is, one recognizes a development or event and attempts to offer an account for it. Conversely, traditional metaphysical philosophy had little to do with history. In fact, metaphysics can be defined as a study of the non-historical, that which escapes change, movement, and opinion. Nietzsche's purpose is to offer an historical antidote to the traditional philosopher's view that human beings have an eternal nature (HH,2).

In regard to truth, Nietzsche's historical philosophizing provides an interpretation of its coming to be (i.e. its rise and development), and in doing so it places truth on an entirely different level. He asks:

> What is truth? a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relations which were poetically and rhetorically heightened, transferred, and adorned, and after long use seem solid, canonical, and binding... (OTL,p.250)

Nietzsche is not interested in constructing a truth-theory *in abstracto*. Truth, for Nietzsche, has nothing to do with correspondence between idea and reality. His position is that truth is not a matter of the correspondence of our claims as detached observers to eternal transcendental realities. Instead, he has challenged the primacy of "correspondence" by showing that truths are illusions, and it is only by forgetfulness that human beings believe that they have found "truth in-itself". As a result, Nietzsche can discard those values which these metaphors served to found. And, as Burch points out, Nietzsche's tactic "does not give rise to a 'truer picture' of things at the level of secure knowledge, but to a 'higher history than all history hitherto' at the level of our being--a transvaluation of values that is our fundamental self-transformation".[14] According to Nietzsche, all appeals to objective "truth" are seductions. "The concept 'truth' is nonsensical. The entire domain of 'true-false' applies only to relations, not to an 'in-itself'" (WP,625). He claims that we lack the least right to posit a "beyond" or an "in-itself" because the "'true' world is fabricated solely from psychological needs" (eg. it fulfilled the human desire for an absolute value), (WP,12[A]). In this respect, there is no such thing as a "thing in-itself" which exists *for* knowledge. Consequently, Nietzsche wants to abandon this notion of truth: "'Truth'? Who has forced this word on me? But I repudiate it; but I disdain this proud word: no, we do not need even this; we shall conquer and come to power even without truth" (WP,749). Instead, Nietzsche regards claims about truth as existentially prior to theory of knowledge. In other words, his

positive views must be considered from the perspective that truth is something that is experienced in everyday life.

Nietzsche's deconstruction of morality and metaphysics threatened to deprive humanity of its source of meaning. In a famous passage from The Gay Science, his declaration that "God is dead!" provides a clear expression of his nihilist thought. He writes:

> *The madman.*-- Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: "I seek God! I seek God!"-- As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? emigrated?-- Thus they yelled and laughed. The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. *We have killed him*-- you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us?...God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him...What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us?..." Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they, too, were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on the ground, and broke into pieces and went out. "I have come too early," he said then; "my time is not yet. This tremendous event is still on its way...it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars-- *and yet they have done it themselves.*" It has been related further that on the same day the madman forced his way into several churches and there struck up his *requiem aeternam deo*. Led out and called to account, he is said always to have replied nothing but: "What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?" (GS,125)

For Nietzsche, the death of God represents a complete devaluation of life in the sense that all meaning and value are lost. However, in pronouncing the death of God, he is certainly not claiming that there was once a God, but now he no longer exists. This interpretation would be nothing but bad metaphysics. Instead, I think that Nietzsche's unusual pronouncement can be understood in two ways. To begin with, it can be taken practically in which case the death of God is construed as an event. In this way, faith in God has ended and the belief in God has become *unbelievable*. It is a time in which the transcendent source is no longer believed in at all, yet the values are paid lip service, and no self-overcoming or self-criticism is even attempted. As a result, the needs of the

situation warrant the claim that God is dead. Secondly, the announcement that "God is dead" could be taken as a metaphor for the death of any objective basis for moral truth. However, in either case, Nietzsche is confronted with the problem of nihilism, and must find a way to escape it. On the one hand, if we assert the existence of God, then *this* world loses its significance, and if we reject God, then *everything* is deprived of value.

It was important for Nietzsche to overcome the nihilistic devaluation of life which had followed the destruction of morality and the metaphysical world. He needed a theory to account for what is distinctively human without appealing to the metaphysical. Nietzsche claimed that there was a single motivating principle for all human behavior: the will to power. His first mention of the "will to power" can be found in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. He writes:

> A tablet of the good hangs over every people. Behold, it is the tablet of their overcomings; behold, it is the voice of their will to power. Praiseworthy is whatever seems difficult to a people; whatever seems indispensable and difficult is called good. (Z,I,"On the Thousand and One Goals")

Nietzsche recognizes that different cultures have different values and codes of conduct, and that all of these are creations of the will to power. As well, he notes that all tablets of the good represent "the tablet of their overcomings", a tablet of the self-imposed commands which turned a herd into a society: primitive aggression has been directed back upon itself, sublimated into *self*-control. In this respect, Nietzsche is introducing the will to power as the will to overcome oneself.

Ultimately, Nietzsche was concerned with the individual's self-overcoming. The will to power is a striving to transcend and perfect oneself. And, Nietzsche claimed that the highest power reveals itself in self-mastery. However, to master oneself is a difficult task, and requires the greatest amount of power. He writes:

> *One thing is needful.*-- To "give style" to one's character-- a great and rare art! It is practised by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed-- both times through long practise and daily work at it. Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it has been reinterpreted and made sublime...It will be the strong and domineering natures that enjoy their finest gaiety in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own; the passion of their tremendous will relents in the face of all stylized nature, of all conquered and serving nature. Even when they have to build palaces and design gardens they demur at giving nature freedom. Conversely, it is the weak characters without power over themselves that *hate* the constraint of style...Such spirits...are always out to shape and interpret their environment as *free* nature: wild, arbitrary, fantastic, disorderly,...only in this way that they can give pleasure to themselves. For one thing is needful: that a human being should *attain* satisfaction with himself...only then is a human being at all tolerable to behold. Whoever is dissatisfied with himself is continually ready for revenge, and we others will be his victims... (GS,290)

This passage suggests that power involves self-discipline. For Nietzsche, self-mastery is the ultimate expression of power, but is reserved for the rare few. In fact, to master oneself is the hardest of all tasks. Those who are successful at self-mastery experience the greatest increase in power, and if happiness is the feeling that power is growing, that resistance is overcome (see A,2), then these individuals would also be the happiest. On the other hand, weakness involves submitting to one's impulses, and that is why he views the weak as "wild, arbitrary, fantastic, and disorderly".

For Nietzsche, individuals must appeal to themselves to make their own life valuable without insisting that there is a specific method for accomplishing this goal. In focusing on the ideas of "self-mastery", and "giving 'style' to one's character", Nietzsche seems to be claiming (as did Aristotle) that the evaluation of people and lives depends on character. He writes: "An action is perfectly devoid of value: it all depends on *who* performs it" (WP,292). Similarly, Zarathustra's self-description pertains to character: "For *that* is what I am through and through: reeling, reeling in, raising up, raising, a raiser, cultivator, and disciplinarian, who once counseled himself, not for nothing: Become who you are!" (Z,IV,1). And, in a passage from The Gay Science, Nietzsche writes that in contrast to those who worry about the "moral value" of their actions, he and the ideal type of people to which he belongs "want to *become those we are*-- human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves" (GS,335,my emphasis). But, ironically, to "become those we are" is at another level, to "become what we are *not*". In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche announces the *Übermensch* (overman), who is the product of the ultimate self-creation, and has attained self-mastery. The transition from Menschen to Übermensch involves becoming something other through a creative act of will. Note, however, that to "become what one is" is not to reach a specific new state and to stop becoming. It is to be engaged in a constantly continuing and continually broadening process of appropriation of one's experiences and actions, and increasing the capacity for assuming responsibility for oneself. "Becoming," Nietzsche writes, "must be explained without recourse to final intentions...Becoming does not aim at a final state, does not flow into 'being'" (WP,708). Our creations become our truths insofar as they reflect who we are as self-choosing beings.

Nietzsche presents the idea of the eternal recurrence in an attempt to overcome nihilism. And, this claim is confirmed by his explanation as to how the eternal recurrence is to be understood. Shortly after he had explicitly stated in Ecce Homo (EH,III,Z,1) that the "fundamental conception" of Thus Spoke Zarathustra is the idea of the eternal recurrence, he directly associates that idea of the recurrence with the basic idea "in the penultimate section of the fourth book (of The Gay Science)". In the section to which Nietzsche refers, the idea of the eternal recurrence is expressed as a formula of self-affirmation. He asks:

> What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same

> succession and sequence-- even this spider monster and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!" Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine." If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each and everything, "Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?" Would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight. Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to crave nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation...? (GS,341)

In this passage Nietzsche is concerned with the attitude one must have toward oneself in order to rejoice or despair over the possibility of such a thought. He believes that the eternal recurrence has the power to transform the thinker. And, as we've just encountered, he writes in The Gay Science: "If this thought were to gain possession of you, it would change you as you are, or perhaps crush you." Nietzsche is providing a metaphorical expression to indicate the profound effect that the doctrine can have on how a person views their life. According to my interpretation, he is not raising the issue of whether the demon is speaking the truth. In fact, Nietzsche is not even presupposing that the world eternally recurs. Burch writes: "The 'thesis' of eternal return-- 'the heaviest of burdens'-- is above all an existential imperative, which if taken up, alters not just what we do and happen to believe, but also who we *are* as self-choosing beings and the world as our *existential* context".[15] In this respect, the "imperative" commands (imperare) only insofar as it is willed, i.e., that we choose to command ourselves in accord with it. It does not command, as it were, "imperially", i.e., because of an external authority. This existential demand for transvaluation can only take place after the total denial of conventional beliefs and values, and it pertains to the individual who is forced to act in the world. Nietzsche's life-affirming individual, the *Übermensch*, through a creative act of will, is capable of overcoming the nihilism resulting from the death of God.

Are the Übermensch and the eternal recurrence to be understood as political notions, or does the individual will the eternal recurrence for herself? It seems to me that the latter represents Nietzsche's view, and that the Übermensch is incompatible with the state. To begin with, Nietzsche never developed his political views with anything like the elaborateness he gave to his discussion of various moral concerns. And, it does not appear that he held any of the standard political ideologies. Hunt writes:

> he [Nietzsche] was not interested in the same questions to which the standard [political] ideologies are answers. If one hastily assumes, on the contrary, that he was interested in the same questions as we are, we can find evidence that he believed any one of several different, mutually inconsistent ideologies: we can "prove" that he was an anarchist, a totalitarian, even a classical liberal.[16]

In regard to Nietzsche's actual concerns, his position can be described most accurately as "anti-political", or "anti-state" (see EH,I,3). He is critical of the state because it is an institution that creates its own "truths" about what we should do, and hence serves as an

unacceptable source of values. In Zarathustra, Nietzsche tells us that it is "where the state *ends*" that we can see "the rainbow and the bridges of the overman" (Z,I,11). The overman's goal is self-perfection, and to accomplish this she creates new values of her own through her existential attempts at self-transcendence. Previously, we had created values only as members of a people (state). It is evident that Nietzsche was not concerned with issues of state policy. Instead, the notion of humanity under a transcendent value is given up in favor of the individual willing the eternal recurrence for herself.

Thus Spoke Zarathustra offers a clear expression of how the eternal recurrence is able to function as the "highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable" (EH,III,on Z.,1). In the section "On Redemption" (Z,II,20), it is implied that an affirmation of life occurs when one is able to accept the totality of one's life (which includes even the painful events from one's past). Nietzsche writes:

> To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all "it was" into "thus I willed it"-- that alone I should call redemption...Willing liberates; but what is it that puts even this liberator in fetters? "It was"-- that is the name of the will's gnashing of teeth and most serious melancholy. Powerless against what has been done, it is an angry spectator of all that is past. The will cannot will backwards; and that it cannot break time and time's covetousness, that is the will's loneliest melancholy. (Z,II,20)

Nietzsche thinks that through a new way of life even the past can be embraced. And, this new way of life allows the past to be renewed: "The will is a creator. All 'it was' is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful accident-- until the creative will says to it, 'But thus I willed it.' Until the creative will says to it, 'But thus I willed it; thus shall I will it'" (Z,II,20). It is this willing which makes redemption possible. Nietzsche's Übermensch would affirm life and love it regardless of its painful moments, and in submitting to the eternal recurrence she would be following an existential imperative which involves an ontological self-transformation. This attempt at self-transcendence is not imposed by any external source, but is realized through an act of will in accord with one's sense of who one is or could be. As well, no universal reason founds this choice of self. Nihilism is not a theoretical stance, but the contemporary way of being. The Übermensch's joy in being as she is, now and ever, is the ultimate sublimation of the will to power and the final overcoming of an otherwise inescapable nihilism.

According to Nietzsche, the willing of the eternal recurrence represents the pinnacle of human achievement. It signifies "the highest state a philosopher can attain: to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence-- my formula for this is *amor fati*" (WP,1041). Nietzsche explains:

> My formula for greatness in a human being is amor fati: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it-- all idealism is mendaciousness in the face of what is necessary-- but *love* it. (EH,II,10)

Nietzsche's conception of greatness calls for more than simply the acceptance of what is necessary, it involves the *love* of fate. His goal is to become a "Yes-sayer". He writes: "I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love

henceforth" (GS,276)! It is worth noting that the idea of *amor fati* precludes any *ressentiment*. Yet, one may wonder why Nietzsche devotes so much effort to attacking morality, especially Christian values, only to tell us later that greatness involves learning "to see as beautiful what is necessary in things". He does, however, provide a response to this query. "*Amor fati* is my inmost nature. But this does not preclude my love of...world-historical irony" (EH,III,W,4). These remarks explain how Nietzsche is able to repudiate Christianity, and at the same time also affirm and appreciate Christianity as necessary (cf. BGE,56,60,61,62;GM,III).

So far I have shown that Nietzsche presents the Übermensch as one who signifies the ultimate affirmation of life, and one who overcomes nihilism by willing the eternal recurrence ("the heaviest of burdens") for herself. In Ecce Homo, Nietzsche elaborates on his conception of the overman.

> The word "overman," as the designation of a type of supreme achievement, as opposed to "modern men", to "good" men, to Christians and other nihilists-- a word that in the mouth of Zarathustra, the annihilator of morality, becomes a very pensive word-- has been understood almost everywhere with the utmost innocence in the sense of those very values whose opposite Zarathustra was meant to represent-- that is, as an "idealistic" type of higher kind of man, half "saint," half "genius." (EH,III,1)

The overman is one who embodies the highest standard of human excellence. In addition, Nietzsche contrasts the overman with his antithesis, the nihilist or what he sometimes refers to as the "last man" (see Z,Prologue;EH,IV,4). According to Nietzsche, the *letzte Mensch* is the most contemptible being for not responding to the threat of nihilism by making the overman the goal of humanity. In this respect, Nietzsche views the last men as an "end" since they prevail at the expense of the *future*. Instead, he thinks that human beings should serve as a "bridge" to the overman. But, what are the distinguishing features of the last men? Who are they? Nietzsche identifies the last men as "good human beings", herd animals, the altruistic, and then equates altruism with morality (see,EH,IV,4). The overman's affirmation of life then, is not solely the response to the nihilism resulting from the death of God, but also to the nihilism associated with the decadent morality of altruism.

It is quite evident that one of Nietzsche's major objections to morality is that it is life-negating (anti-natural). But, in order for Nietzsche to argue that morality offers value judgments that are anti-natural, he must provide evidence for this psychological interpretation. On the Genealogy of Morals contains discussion of this matter particularly in Nietzsche's account of ascetic ideals. For Nietzsche, "ascetic ideals" appear to be any ideal that requires one to frustrate the basic needs of the human organism (eg. the desire to feel good about oneself, sex instinct). The asceticism that Nietzsche rejects is the one that regards the basic needs as inherently bad. However, Nietzsche claims that these needs are essential parts of life, and to condemn them would mean that one views life as "a wrong road...or a mistake that is put right by deeds" (GM,III,11). This form of asceticism from On the Genealogy of Morals is equivalent to what he calls anti-natural morality in Twilight of the Idols. It is important to realize, however, that Nietzsche's explanation of anti-natural morality (asceticism) depends on a certain assumption:

> It is plain that in this essay I proceed on a presupposition that I do not first have to demonstrate to readers of the kind I need: that man's "sinfulness" is not a fact...the latter viewed in a religio-moral perspective that is no longer binding on us. (GM,III,16)

By denying the religio-moral perspective, Nietzsche must provide a naturalistic explanation of "sinfulness" (and other concepts associated with an ascetic morality such as "guilt" and "damnation"). According to Nietzsche, these concepts owe their existence to the false beliefs that people hold regarding supernatural entities, and hence cannot serve as descriptions of natural phenomena. These descriptions would only be plausible if one presupposes the existence of a supernatural world. Consequently, Nietzsche cannot explain why people use these concepts by pointing to evidence which leads them to do so. Of course, the people who use such concepts think that they have supporting evidence, that is to say, epistemological access to a supernatural world (eg. revelation). It is evident in Nietzsche's writings that he often appeals to life-promoting values in opposition to the anti-natural values inherent in ascetic morality. But, his project does not involve offering a new eternal measure of value to replace a life-negating mode of valuation. When he appeals to "life" then, it is not to invoke a new measure against Christian or Platonic measures, but to invoke becoming over being, and the intelligibility of flux in *medias res* over the vision of truth *sub specie aeternitatis*.

It would appear then that Nietzsche's rejection of metaphysical truth would seem to favor a plurality of interpretations insofar as it denies objective certainty. However, the traditional philosopher may respond by claiming that insofar as the perspectival, metaphorical nature of truth is affirmed *absolutely*, the thesis is self-refuting on its own terms. And, if that is the case, then Nietzsche's thought is nothing more than a passing interpretation, an ideology that displays its author's self-conscious estrangement from European-Christian culture. A decisive response, however, can be given to this objection. Burch, quoting Gadamer, writes: "It is no refutation of the acceptance of...fundamental conditionedness that this acceptance itself seeks to be true absolutely and unconditionally. The consciousness of conditionedness in no way dissolves [*aufhebt*] conditionedness".[17] The notion of "fundamental conditionedness" is, itself, a universal truth about the essence of truth. In other words, it offers a fixed conception of truth, but it is not a truth that pertains to any determinate reality. Instead, it is a truth that occurs in the context of personal existence. For Nietzsche, truth is revealed in situated action which is ontologically prior to discourse about objective "truth". And, knowledge of this situation is disclosed "in and through our existential attempts at radical self-transcendence, and legitimated through an appropriative interpretation whose *terminus a quo et ad quem* is 'existence' itself".[18] Thus, Nietzsche is exempt from the criticism that his perspectival view of truth is self-refuting. His own philosophical "narrative" is meant to serve *practice* rather than theoretical discussion about objective "truth". And, the justification of the content of Nietzsche's own "narrative" would come from his understanding and response to what he considers the situation to demand.

Nietzsche presents the Übermensch as one who reacts to the real needs of the situation. He recognizes and responds to the threat of nihilism by embracing the existential imperative contained in the idea of the eternal recurrence. In doing so, there

is no attempt to demonstrate the "falsity" of all previous metaphysical narratives, and to replace them with a "truer" account. Instead, past metaphysical narratives are shown to be existentially, and ontologically inappropriate to the real needs of the situation. As a result, Nietzsche is justified in revaluing the values that these past metaphysical narratives have served to found. This means that all previous attempts to ground claims to moral validity in putatively universal and ahistorical standards of reasoning do not reflect the current needs of the situation. The transvaluation of values is a self-transformation, but it may or may not be realized. Nihilism or the "last man" could reign supreme.

Nietzsche's *Überwindung* of metaphysics shows that all appeals to incontrovertible truth are groundless. But, it does not allow us to escape the problem of self-deception, and illusion. In fact, a serious problem pertaining to the idea of the eternal recurrence is created by self-deception. It seems to me that self-deception may convince us that we are drawing near to this ideal relationship to life and to the world, when in actuality we are not. I could desire to repeat my life only because I am unwilling to acknowledge its objectionable features. Moreover, Nietzsche seems content to allow the individual to be the judge of what constitutes part of a life. "Nietzsche...constantly emphasizes the importance of evaluating oneself only by one's own standards".[19] As a result, I may focus on a specific part of my life, rather than view my life in its entirety. But, Nietzsche appears to be cognizant of these difficulties, and that is why he describes the human situation from the demon's question as one's "loneliest loneliness". At this time, one would be most inclined to be honest with oneself. And, this also explains why Nietzsche stresses the difficulty with which Zarathustra finally accepts the idea of the recurrence. He is pointing out how painful a self-examination is, but he also realizes that it is necessary before one can affirm life. In addition, it must be remembered that a desire for nothing to be other than it is presupposes that everything has been faced. There still remains the problem that there is no independent criterion to determine that we have faced the totality of our actions. And, the problem becomes worse with the realization that we may never be able to face all our actions. "The process of interpreting one's life as it occurs is potentially a never ending task, looking for a moment that would allow complete affirmation".[20]

How would Nietzsche respond to these objections? To begin with, I think that he would acknowledge that we can never eliminate the possibility that we are deceiving ourselves. In fact, he seems to think that error, and self-delusion actually aid life. He writes: "'Why do you not want to deceive?' especially if it should seem-- and it does seem!-- as if life aimed at semblance, meaning error, deception, simulation, delusion, self-delusion..." (GS,344). Perhaps, Nietzsche would allow for self-deception insofar as it is part of one's response to the real needs of the situation. Thus, the Übermensch would not have to rule out the possibility that he is deceiving himself before he can respond to nihilism and affirm life by embracing the idea of the eternal recurrence. But, if there are no objective criteria that determine an authentic existence and allow us to distinguish it from an inauthentic one, then are we at the mercy of arbitrary preferences, so that Nietzsche's Übermensch gets exalted to the level of the ultimate? These are serious objections, and ones that we could expect from those who embrace either a

narrow empiricism or a narrow rationalism, and who want to treat human beings and actions as one might treat any natural phenomenon. But, perhaps Nietzsche thinks that we need more flexible and complex methods of human inquiry than are demanded when minerals or plants form the object of our discussion. I have shown that Nietzsche's project was not intended to offer a specific answer to the question of how we are to view ourselves. Instead, the transvaluation and the Übermensch are at once historical/ontological projects. The issue of self-deception is a theoretical concern which is secondary to Nietzsche's existential demand for transvaluation. In fact, the knowledge that concerns Nietzsche has to do with individuals who are forced to act in the world, and this "practical" knowledge is a truth that is revealed in life. In this respect, he has challenged the primacy of metaphysical truth and has advanced his own view of knowledge which maintains that claims about truth are revealed in life, having first and foremost existential significance. According to Nietzsche's approach, the validity of existential imperatives does not depend on whether one has ruled out the possibility of self-deception. The nature of the individual is always an open question. But, the fact that human beings are unfinished and constantly adapting to new situations does not mean that a description is impossible, but that such a description must be directed to possibilities, rather than properties. "The result, then, is not an immunity from the seductions of a particular discourse, but the recognition that seductions are everywhere, and that we must always make our way in circumstances that are impropitious, for neither the way itself nor its signposts are given in advance or with certainty".[21] One can always ask why we should accept Nietzsche's historical approach, an approach that makes situated action prior to theory of knowledge, over traditional metaphysical philosophy. There seems to be no mutually persuasive theoretical "refutation", since each approach denies what the other takes to be at issue, and what constitutes genuine evidence. And, Nietzsche's rejection of the theoretical/practical distinction indicates that there is really nothing to oppose to "practical interest". Thus, the position that one accepts could only be based on one's own "practical interest". Burch, quoting Fichte, writes: "What sort of philosophy one chooses depends therefore on what sort of person one is".[22]

What sort of person was Nietzsche, and what was his "practical interest"? To begin with, Nietzsche points out that life demands that we posit values of some sort (BGE,9). His purpose for proclaiming the death of God, and announcing the Übermensch, one who has responded to the threat of nihilism by taking up the existential imperative expressed in the idea of the recurrence, was to restore quality in the individual's life. For Nietzsche, metaphysical ideals were a contributing factor to the devaluation of human life. However, he was able to fulfill his goal of restoring value to one's life only by "deconstructing" past metaphysical narratives, which included replacing metaphysics with an historical approach to philosophy. One of Nietzsche's greatest objections to metaphysical philosophy was the absense of an historical sense. He writes: "Everything the philosopher has declared about man is, however, at bottom no more than a testimony as to the man of a *very limited* period of time. Lack of historical sense is the family failing of all philosophers" (HH,2). According to Nietzsche, however, human beings certainly do *not* constitute the non-historical. But, he also thought that to offer some account of human beings in history is insufficient to show what makes human

beings historical. Instead, Nietzsche seems to think that history is the history of values or morality. He claims that people are defined by the tablets of the good which hangs over all of them (see Z,I,15). In other words, creating a new history means positing new values. Thus, a close relation between history and value emerges from Nietzsche's approach to philosophy. He was interested in overcoming nihilism by restoring value to the individual's life. I think that it would be extremely difficult to show that life, and the positing of values, are not concerns shared by everyone.

Nietzsche's Immoralism or Amoralism?

There is no doubt that Nietzsche was a critic of morality, and in most of his works he refers to himself as an "immoralist". But, it is important to come to terms with the nature of his immoralism. On the one hand, he describes his position as a "liberation from **all** moral values" (EH,III,D,1), and refers to Zarathustra as the "annihilator of morality" (EH,III,1). And, at other times, it appears that Nietzsche does not oppose all moral valuation since he sometimes claims to favor certain moralities over others (see HH,23;GS,304). In this respect, there seems to be some inconsistency in Nietzsche's writings.[23] Does Nietzsche's immoralism involve a rejection of all moralities or only a specific type of morality? A response to this question requires that one make hard judgments on what critical weight to give certain passages. I rely on a passage from Ecce Homo in which Nietzsche actually defines his "immoralism". He writes:

> my term *immoralist* involves two negations. For one, I negate a type of man that has so far been considered supreme: the good, the benevolent, the beneficent. And then I negate a type of morality that has become prevalent and predominant as morality itself-- the morality of decadence or, more concretely, *Christian* morality. (EH,IV,4)

It appears that Nietzsche's negation of morality represents an attack on the ways in which moral views have become prevalent and predominant. According to Nietzsche, morality is not something *in abstracto* but the way in which certain views of what is supreme have come into play and hold sway in the world. And, as I discussed in the first two chapters, he claims that moral concepts are all humanly created systems of value that misunderstand themselves by placing the source of value in some transcendent "beyond". His immoralism involves a negation of the morality of decadence (which was a product of error, accepting this "beyond" as a source of value), as well as a negation of the type of individual that it produced. This interpretation corresponds with my discussion of Nietzsche's campaign against morality being directed towards a morality of selflessness. He explains:

> What is certain is that it [humanity] has been *taught* only decadence values as supreme values. The morality that would un-self man is the morality of decline... This only morality that has been taught so far, that of un-selfing, reveals a will to the end; fundamentally, it negates life. (EH,IV,7)

Nietzsche's point is that the conditions which gave birth to morality were responsible for producing decadent values. It would appear then that his immoralism involves a rejection of all morality insofar as he regards the morality of decadence as the "only morality".

Nietzsche, however, had other reasons for describing himself as an immoralist besides indicating that he is attacking morality altogether. He reveals:

> There is yet another sense, however, in which I have chosen the word *immoralist* as a symbol and badge of honor for myself; I am proud of having this word which distinguishes me from the whole of humanity. (EH,IV,6)

Nietzsche's motivation for choosing the word "immoralist" lies in his desire to separate himself from the rest of humanity, and to indicate his objection to morality.

So far I have been trying to explain what Nietzsche means by the term "immoralism". But, what I have described as his immoralism does not seem to capture the complexity of his campaign against morality. He even admits that the expression "immoralist" does not represent an adequate designation (see GS,346). In addition, he was cognizant of the fact that a rejection of morality is not an argument, *eo ipso*, for immoralism. I think that Nietzsche characterized himself as an "immoralist" primarily to distinguish himself from the rest of humanity, and not because he concluded that "immoralism" best described his views on morality.

What does it mean to be an "immoralist"? An immoralist is one who acts contrary to moral and social standards.[24] For example, killing a person in violation of moral standards is immoral. This person has committed an evil act. So, an "immoralist" would be one who chooses evil over good. Is this Nietzsche's position? Would he encourage people to act in direct opposition to moral standards? He explains his position: "I deny morality as I deny alchemy... I also deny immorality: not that countless people feel themselves to be immoral, but that there is any true *reason* so to feel" (D,103). He then adds an explanation to assure his readers that he is not endorsing immoral behavior simply because there's no "true reason" to feel immoral.

> It goes without saying that I do not deny-- unless I am a fool-- that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged-- but I think the one should be encouraged and the other avoided *for other reasons than hitherto*. (D,103)

Nietzsche's explanation does not inform us of which actions are to be done and avoided, but this passage provides us with some valuable information. For instance, we learn that Nietzsche's position is not a straightforward reversal of morality, or else he would not be rejecting immorality. Presumably, the actions that he endorses will include those which are commonly referred to as "moral" and "immoral". But, I think that the purpose of §103 of Daybreak was to show that what is rejected is not this or that reason or reasons, but the whole range of possible rational justifications that Nietzsche terms "moral". His project was an attempt to undermine any effort to establish a rational core of moral reasoning independent of claims about history. For Nietzsche, morality was unable to generalize its standards in a rationally defensible way. He claimed that values are necessarily tied to history, culture, and practical life. And, he defined "good" as "everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power, power itself" (A,2). The will to power finds its ultimate expression in self-overcoming, and this is exemplified by the Übermensch. In place of metaphysics, Nietzsche's Übermensch overcomes nihilism (the needs of the situation) by submitting to the eternal recurrence which serves as an existential imperative. For Nietzsche, then, value is inextricably tied to practical life.

It is evident that Nietzsche is not rejecting what has hitherto been called morality, in order to replace traditional morality with a morality of his own. If this was his intent, then his immoralism would still lie within the domain of morality. But, he explicitly states: "I do not wish to promote any morality", and in the same passage he encourages us to treat morality as "something forbidden". He ends this section with a question: "Hasn't the time come to say of morality what Meister Eckhart said: 'I ask God to rid

me of God'" (GS,292). It is apparent that Nietzsche has no interest in opposing morality so that he can create a morality of his own. In aphorism 1 of The Gay Science, Nietzsche points out disapprovingly that we are still in the age of moralities, and that his ideal of a "gay science" has yet to be realized. In Book IV of that same work, Nietzsche is much clearer about his demands. He writes: "Let us limit ourselves...to the *creation of our own new tables of what is good*, and let us stop brooding about the 'moral value of our actions'!" (GS,335) Here, Nietzsche is drawing a distinction between these "new tables of the good", and moral valuation. According to Nietzsche, the two are mutually exclusive. He claims that moral valuation holds that our opinions about "good" can be *proved true*, but he rejects this view. Further, Nietzsche argues that "sitting in moral judgment should offend our taste" (GS,335). He also expresses his gratitude to art which allows us to "stand *above* morality", and makes existence bearable "as an aesthetic phenomenon" (GS,107). Together, these claims indicate that Nietzsche's position is something other than "moral". It seems to me that the term "amoralism" offers a more accurate description of his thought than the term "immoralism". An "amoral" person is one who is not committed to moral or social standards of right and wrong. Nietzsche fits this description in the sense that he wants to go beyond the framework of morality, and leave the "illusion of moral judgment beneath himself" (TI,VII,1).

I refer to Nietzsche as an amoralist insofar as his position is *outside* the realm of morality. In any case, he is certainly not an immoralist by the current definition of the word. There is a risk then that a contemporary English speaking readership would regard Nietzsche's reference to himself as an "immoralist" by their understanding of the word, and in doing so, would fail to realize that Nietzsche's conception of the word varies from their own. This could lead to a misunderstanding of his position. However, there is an obvious sense in which Nietzsche's perspective is not amoralism, either in the sense of indifferent to morality or opposite to morality. "Amoralism" is never defined as "against morality", yet a major component of Nietzsche's project was to undermine morality. It would appear then that "immoralism" and "amoralism" are both inadequate terms. Nietzsche needs a term that carries us *beyond*, and that may not be readily available. However, "amoralism" and Nietzsche's perspective that is "beyond good and evil" are both located outside the realm of morality. The term "amoralism" may not include many of the features that comprise Nietzsche's project, but it better conveys to a contemporary English speaking readership its meaning than does the term "immoralism".

ENDNOTES

1. Nietzsche's previous four major works include: The Birth of Tragedy (1872), Untimely Meditations (1873-76), Human, All-Too-Human (1878), and The Wanderer and His Shadow (1880).

2. For Nietzsche, "metaphysics" is the attempt to present a comprehensive, coherent, and consistent account of a transcendent reality. He rejects metaphysics, particularly the idea that by the process of thinking we can arrive at fundamental, undeniable truths about the universe (reality, God, being).

3. It is worth pointing out that Nietzsche does not always use the word "war" metaphorically to represent attacks on ideals. But, he was certainly using "war" in this context here.

4. An example of this type of denial would be a claim that all so-called "moral" actions are actually motivated by selfish concerns, that human beings never perform actions that are "truly" moral. In contrast, Nietzsche's position is that human beings really do act from moral motives, morality exists (albeit due to error).

5. Clark, M. "Nietzsche's Attack On Morality", p.30

6. Clark, p.77

7. Living for others.

8. Nielsen, K. "Nietzsche As A Moral Philosopher", Man & World 6 (1973), p.188

9. Discordant concord of things: Horace, *Epistles*, I.12.19.

10. Clark, p.51

11. This quote is from (Kaufmann) footnote 15 of §345 of The Gay Science.

12. Nehamas, A. Nietzsche: Life As Literature. p.207

13. Some writers who think that Nietzsche's positive views on morality are not worthy of taking seriously include:
Maudemarie Clark, "Nietzsche's Attack On Morality".
Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life As Literature.

14. Burch, R. "Conloquium Interruptum: Stopping to Think", from Simpson, E. (ed.) 1987. Anti-Foundationalism and Practical Reasoning, p.103

15. Burch, p.106-7

16. Hunt, L. Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue, p.26

17. Burch, p.106

18. Burch, p.106

19. Nehamas, p.186

20. Ackermann, R.J. Nietzsche: A Frenzied Look, p.158

21. Burch, p.107

22. Burch, p.111

23. Lester Hunt has written that there is no way to make all of Nietzsche's remarks on the scope of his immoralism entirely consistent.

24. Angeles, P. Dictionary of Philosophy, p.128

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

The Antichrist (A), trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Press, 1982)

Beyond Good and Evil (BGE), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Press, 1966)

The Case of Wagner (CW), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Press, 1967)

Daybreak (D), trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982)

Ecce Homo (EH), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Press, 1968)

The Gay Science (GS), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Press, 1974)

Human, All-Too-Human (HH), trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986).

On the Genealogy of Morals (GM), trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Press, 1968)

On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense (OTL), trans. Sander Gilman, Carole Blair, and David Parent in *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989)

Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Z), trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *The Portable Nietzsche*

Twilight of the Idols (TI), trans. Walter Kaufmann, in *The Portable Nietzsche*

The Will to Power (WP), trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Press, 1968)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ackermann, R.J. Nietzsche: A Frenzied Look. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1990.

Angeles, P.A. Dictionary of Philosophy. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989.

Clark, M. "Nietzsche's Attack On Morality", Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977.

Hunt, L. Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Kaufmann, W. Nietzsche. 4th edition. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974.

Nehamas, A. Nietzsche: Life as Literature. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985.

Nielsen, K. "Nietzsche As A Moral Philosopher." Man & World 6, (1973): 182-205.

Simpson, E. (ed.) Anti-Foundationalism and Practical Reasoning. Edmonton: Academic Printing & Publishing, 1987.